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# Glories of the love of Jesus

Jesse Brett

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**GLORIES OF  
THE LOVE OF JESUS**

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THE ASCENSION

# GLORIES OF THE LOVE OF JESUS

## DEVOTIONAL STUDIES

BY THE

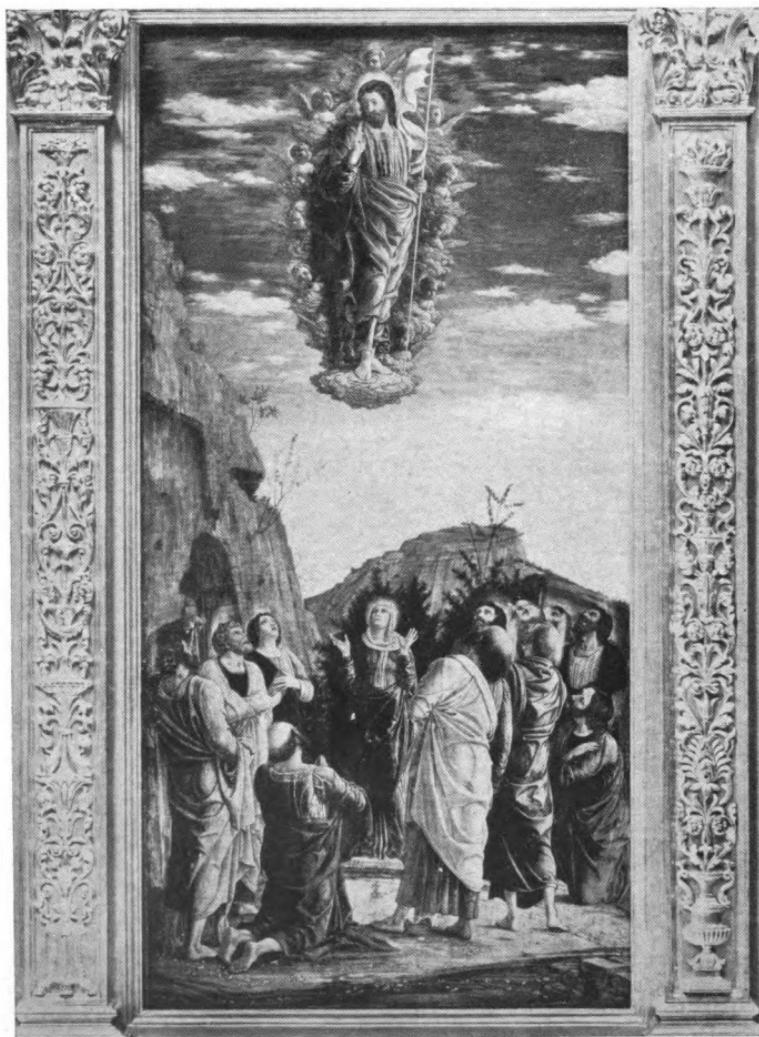
REV. JESSE BRETT, L.Th.

AUTHOR OF "THE ALTAR AND THE ALTAR," "ANIMA COVISO,"  
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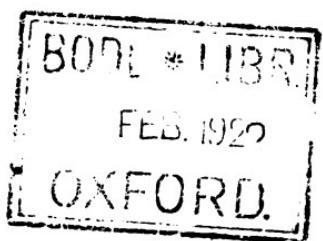
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## PREFACE

IF it be the wisdom of the Christian to know how little he knows, then it is folly on the part of a Catholic writer to assume that he has exhausted his subject when it relates to Divine mysteries. In attempting to write about a fact so entirely Divine, and yet perfectly human, as the love of Jesus, he can only, after all his efforts to arrive at the truth, lay his hand upon his mouth and acknowledge his imperfections; he must declare the poverty of his thought and the inadequacy of his language; he must ask pardon of God of that which he knows within himself to have hindered the perfect manifestation of the love he has contemplated, and sought to make known. This little book is not set out with any idea of completeness of expression, even within the limits defined by the several chapters. I am aware that more might have been written within those limits as well as very much beyond them; but I hope the book as a whole is sufficiently comprehensive to make it of use to any who desire to renew their thought of the love of Our Lord. Perhaps, too, it may help towards that more perfect devotion to Him which is so greatly to be desired, and which is the acknowledged purpose of those who now, more

than ever, are working for the deepening of the spiritual life of England.

I would ask my readers to labour to that same end; and if what I have written is of any assistance, I am repaid. Will they also of their charity remember me in their prayers, and especially at the Altar.

J. B.

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## GLORIES OF THE LOVE OF JESUS

### I

#### Of the Glory of the Love of Jesus in His Incarnation

### I

*“God is love.”* We can have no simpler conception of God; neither can we have a greater. It is the central truth of all His revelation to us. We were called into being that we might both love Him and be loved by Him. His Divine attitude towards man may be described as a continuous act of love. We do not fully apprehend the truth when we regard the several expressions of His love as separated acts. His love is expressed in one act, and that act is His Own glorious life. He is infinitely above us in the fulness of that life; but we are led from point to point in the understanding of it when we cease to regard these manifestations as separate acts, and perceive them as they really are: aspects of a continuous act of love. He is Himself love, and every

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expression of His will, and every manifestation of His power, is His love coming forth to us as we are able to receive it and respond to it.

Because "*God is love*," the whole relation of intelligent creatures to Him must be of love if it is ever to be perfected; that is, we cannot otherwise fulfil the purpose of our creation. The fact that compels our attention in the world as it is to-day is this: by far the greater part of human life is lived not in that relation of love to God, but in ignorance of it. It is an appalling fact to anyone who will contemplate it. The causes are many and complex, and it would be invidious to attempt to apportion blame for a state of things that is universal. The ideal of the Christian life has from the beginning been *love*—love to God and love to man. Love to God is the first and highest aim, and without it there cannot be love to man as He commands it. Love, or charity, to be effectual as God wills it, must be a supernatural virtue. Natural virtue will fail at the point where Christian—supernatural—virtues will attain their highest expression. Charity must be the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, finding ways and means of expression towards all others for His sake.

Can we find on the part of intelligent creatures perfect examples of right relation to God the Creator in love? Yes. The command to love is not impossible of obedience. The ideal of love is not unattainable by the creature. We are not acquainted with any intelligent creatures except Angels and men.

If we remind ourselves of evil spirits, they are fallen angels, and therefore do not constitute a third order in creation. We do not look in vain for the perfection of relationship in love to God; for the Angels are perfect beings, and love God with the fulness of their powers, which are immeasurably greater than those of man in his earthly state. We may say of the Angels that they exist by love and for love; that their relation to God is simply one of love. But man has not kept his first estate as the Angels have, and therefore his proper relation to God has been broken; but not broken beyond possibility of renewal. And it is in that renewed and restored relationship that he is to attain to the perfection of love. Can this be done? The Saints give the answer. They represent in themselves that restored humanity in whom the relation of the soul to God in love has been perfected through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we consider the glorious love of the Son of God in our human nature which has made Sainthood the very crown of human life, we must contemplate the Saints, those true lovers of God who by word and example teach us the way of love. In the highest degree they have been men and women who through love have attained to a perfect union with God. They were His lovers, they were enamoured of His beauty and perfections; and He on His part manifested His love to them in extraordinary ways. He guided and trained them until they were prepared in love for the highest possible experience of it—the perfect union with Himself.

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We notice that pre-eminently it was the Sacred Person of the Holy Trinity through Whom the highest degree of union was effected. It was never a setting aside of the glorious mystery of the Trinity. In a wondrous and mystical manner, the Three Divine Persons were associated in the supreme work of love; but it was through the Person of the Incarnate Lord that that work was accomplished. The reason for this may be given in the words of M. Ribot : “ It is not only the Divine Person of the Word, but the Word clothed in our humanity, even Jesus Christ our Lord, Who becomes the real Bridegroom of our souls. This union of the Incarnate Word with souls is only the extension and conclusion of His union with human nature; because ‘ *the Word became Flesh* ’ in order to win souls and make them participators in His life, and thus to bring back all creation by them and with them to His Father.” This is most reasonable, for the Incarnation provides and secures the appropriate way of union with God for every soul.<sup>1</sup>

This mystical union crowns the life of love. If we are not indeed permitted to assume so great a perfection of love in every individual Saint because all lives are not equally well known, or recorded, we still have the evidence of their love, of their personal devotion to our Lord, and of their faithfulness in relation to Him; showing how intent they were in maintaining that relationship to the highest possible degree of love. Nor must we forget that the Saints are not few in number. They belong to every age and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. John xiv. 6.

race and clime. They are the beauty and glory of each succeeding generation, of our own no less than those that are past. Their witness is universal. Lovers of Christ, they present Him to the World as their Lord Beloved—"chiefest among ten thousand . . . and altogether lovely."<sup>1</sup>

And to-day there are Saints in the making. To-day are to be found men and women to whom our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is the supreme Object of love. It is not of every Christian that this may be said; but it ought to be more universally true than it is. He claims and receives from some this supreme love and devotion; while others, not less earnest and devout, are more attracted in devotion to contemplation of the Divine Fatherhood, or the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost. There may be a reason for these particular attractions. It may be the will of God to manifest His love in these several ways to individuals, that through them it may be made known in its fulness to the world. But however this may be, we must assume that the perfection of love which consists in this highest degree of union between the soul and God is realized, as we have said, through union with the Incarnate Word. And indeed, notwithstanding particular attractions and habits of devotion, there will always be love for our Lord Jesus Christ; and in some this love amounts to a passion; while He on His part manifests His love in ways so intimate that the soul has no power to resist it, even if she would. The experience of this

<sup>1</sup> Cant. v. 10, 16.

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love as the Saints have known it is still the joy of faithful souls. He is leading them by the favoured way of His Saints, and to the same end. And we but adore Him for all He is thereby effecting within the Church. His love perfected in souls is the strength and glory of His Mystical Body.

There is an implied duty in all this—the duty of love, which is the duty of us all. If we recognize our own duty in the way of love, we must surely perceive the greatness of our individual indebtedness. This is a cold way of expressing a truth which should move us to the depth of our being; but we do need to remember that it is not enough to wait for some particular movement of love towards us which will awaken us to more energetic response. Poverty of love is often the result of indifference towards our Lord, or of indefiniteness in devotion. We have not, it may be, sought Him in order to know Him, and therefore we have but a poor conception of His love. Our hearts have not gone out to Him, and so there has been no joyous sense of love meeting love. But this is, after all, what many a soul is needing. It is the meaning of many a vague impulse within the soul that is yet not fully awake to His love. It is the meaning, too, of those occasional attractions of which we are conscious, when we are drawn, we know not why, to desire some higher spiritual good. Such times of inward unrest are times of warning. Our Lord Beloved seeks to be loved, and is seeking to win the soul. He would make that one His Own in the way peculiar to love. There is a deep truth in

this which we do not know perfectly until we are able to say with the Bride : “ *My Beloved is mine, and I am His.*” <sup>1</sup>

But this action of our Lord towards individuals has a yet wider purpose. He wills to draw all souls to Himself; <sup>2</sup> but He will do it partly by means of the attracting glory of His love revealed in individual Christians. Thus He wills, and thus He seeks to consummate His work of love. The glory of His love as a Heavenly vision is spread out to those who train their spiritual faculties by the exercise of love. And how many might behold it if they would calmly and very simply choose the way of love for themselves ! They would prepare themselves for that revelation of love from Him which would compel a life-long devotion, and we are sure would accelerate the making of Saints, even in this age of trial and conflict. If we would contemplate the Heart of Jesus burning with love, eager to pour it into every Christian heart, and yet prevented by the very indifference and coldness of those hearts, how awful appears the attitude towards Him of even those who by profession are His ! Will they because of their weak love fail Him in the day of trial ? Are they even now failing Him when He would both use them and exalt them in His love ? Such questions are for the soul within itself. If we say : “ Oh, the unlove of the world ! ” we know we are sighing over that which is only true ; but are we responsible for it in any degree ? Have we let the love of our Lord Jesus Christ speak in and through us ?

<sup>1</sup> Cant. ii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S. John xii. 32.

Have we expressed it in our conduct, our attitude, our behaviour, our conversation? If we are true to our Lord Beloved, we must not evade such questions, however heart-searching they may be. We may be responsible for at least some of the evil we deplore.

## II

The glory of love in the Incarnate Word is first of all to be contemplated in the Self-existent life of the ever-blessed Trinity. As first we apply ourselves in thought to consideration of that Divine love as an eternal glory within itself, and then in silence of spirit seek in love to realize that fact of Divine glory; we may perceive movements deeper and more wonderful than we can ever perfectly know; yet our spirits meeting His Spirit in love we are able to receive even an unutterable truth, and rejoice in it. So it is as we are raised in contemplation of essential Divine love. We bring to our aid the verities of the Faith, and from them, as solid bases of truth, we may behold the glory of Divine love. Thus we take our stand upon the truth of the Incarnation. What vision of love is that which is presented as antecedent to that truth? We perceive not only that ineffable relationship of love wherein the Three adorable Persons are One, but also that there is in that very Unity a degree of love, a joy which can be communicated to no creature, not even the Seraphim. And yet God, Who is Self-sufficing in love and joy, has within that love a certain characteristic which we may describe as Divine generosity. The Divine love has all the essentials of

love, as we understand them, in a supreme degree; and in each surpasses all that we can in our most exalted moments attribute to Him. There is in each characteristic a perfection of glory which centres in His Own eternal existence; or, which amounts to the same thing, radiates from the essential glory of His Divine Nature. True to the requirements of love, God proves His love by acts of Self-giving. The Creation may be regarded as a series of acts whereby God called into being the material universe, and in particular two orders of creatures, Angels and men, each capable of love. Thus at once He had objects of love, and became Himself the Object of creaturely love. Some Divine necessity of love within Himself was thus met and satisfied.

But in His love the Creator did more. He formed the design of union between Himself and the creature of His love. It were vain to speculate upon the purposes of that design, beyond affirming that it was a high eternal purpose of love of which we can at present form most imperfect ideas. We may have most clear convictions, we may infer tremendous truths concerning it from all that has been revealed to the Church, we may affirm much as we realize the glory of Sainthood; but not in this life are we to know the full glory of the Divine purpose of love. But it is given us to know that God wills to raise His creature—man—to a state of union with Himself, and that His gifts of grace and love are both conferred and infused in order that His will may be effectual through our spiritual fitness for union.

B

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The wondrous mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word is none other than the mystery of this purpose of Divine love—the union of His creature with Himself. The Only-Begotten Son came forth in the glory of that eternal purpose of love and took to Himself the nature and flesh of man. He found in the Immaculate Mary a shrine for the glory which rested upon Him, as obedient to love He united Himself to man to raise him to the predestined glory. Formal language fails us here. Theological precision is cold and inadequate. It is only by that secret and wordless language of love that the truth is conveyed to our souls; and it is only thus that we in turn acknowledge it, and praise Him as He Himself reveals the glory of His love.

But, as if this were not enough, the Son of God added yet lustre to the glory of His love. If we cannot perfectly conceive of the glory of love within the fact of the Hypostatic Union, how shall we ever understand the superadded glory of love's sacrifice in Him? We think of the Divine love in Him in all its eternal beauty, and fulness, and perfection; and then we reflect that He, the Son of God, reached forth in love to claim and achieve something more, to add to the inherent glory of love by consummating an act whereby His love should be for ever satisfied in itself—for in sacrifice alone does love stand revealed in perfected glory. The humiliation, the sacrifice, which culminated in the Cross on Calvary, were the outward signs of an act of love which was no other than that of Divine Self-sacrifice: “*Wherefore God*

*also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name.*"<sup>1</sup>

We contemplate the Incarnate Lord with love and thereby perceive the glory, too unearthly for open vision. It is a glory of love which only love may perceive. There is an unloving way of discoursing about Him, of speculating about His Person, of analysing His words or His motives, of explaining away what does not harmonize with some preconceived ideas, but all such treatment is but a hiding of His glory. We may not only darken the vision, but also render ourselves incapable of seeing it, if unlovingly we presume to discuss Him. There is only one way of truly knowing Him; it is the way of love, the way of the Saints. And the knowledge is conveyed to the soul as it mounts higher in love, yea, as it is transformed into the very likeness of His glory: "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*"<sup>2</sup> The glory is thus first seen in Him, but love makes us sharers in it. That is the experience in us of the purpose of His love.

### III

This glory of the love of the Incarnate Word is reflected in the souls of men. But the degree of its light is not the same in all souls. Upon the unregenerate there falls only a distant ray of that glory.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.

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Within the regenerate there is a beam of that glory, because of the infused virtue of love; but so often there is no increase of its light because there is no correspondence to grace, no effort on the part of the soul, no perseverance in the way of love. Within those who are established in the Sacramental life there is the glory according to the degree of their union with their Lord. By His gift of Himself in Communion He communicates the glory of His love. The life of each witnesses to the indwelling glory according to the strength or weakness of the love which directs it. The Sacraments are effectual means of grace, and essential to the life of love as the bases upon which it is built up. The union of the soul with God by grace must be established before the union by love becomes possible. The acts of our religion tend steadily towards that union with God which was the purpose of His love in the Incarnation.

This view of catholic religion widens into a glorious vision of Divine love, of the purpose of God as now in process of fulfilment, and in due time to be made manifest in the final triumph of the Saints. But is it only a vision? Are they to whom it is given only visionaries who, if the judgment of some be accepted, are missing reality? If it be but an empty vision, then the Saints have been deceived; then the evidence of spiritual experience is worthless, and the claims of the Church are vain. But no! These things are true. They are unreal only to those whose whole idea of reality is material. The spiritual world is more real to those whose aim is to do the will of God

than anything of this world can be. If we live and walk in the Spirit, then the things of the Spirit are realized as of eternal endurance. We live in a world above nature, a world of eternal realities, a supernatural life. If grace be the foundation of this supernatural state, then love is its glory and beauty, love is its perfection. But all this implies a life wherein the soul is in conscious relation to One loved; that is, moreover, a life lived in anticipation of a certain consummation. What is that consummation but the purpose of God as revealed in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word fulfilled in the union of the soul with Him? The more purely the glory of love rests upon the Church and upon the individual, the nearer we are corporately and severally to the ideal which is God's Own for us.

It becomes, therefore, of first concern to the soul to know itself in this relation of love to the Incarnate Word. To know Him, to love Him, to know His love towards ourselves, in the most intimate and personal way should be the one aim in the practice of our religion. And religion should be not a part of our life but the whole of it. We must love Him for ourselves. Yes, but not for ourselves alone. We must love Him, and that so purely that the glory of His love may rest upon us; but we must also, for His sake, and in the power of that love, live in true charity towards all others about us. We must learn the very principles of our earthly citizenship by applying ourselves to that sacred study of the mind of Christ which is even easier to the unlearned than to the

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learned.<sup>1</sup> The lore of love is the learning of the Saints. But this cannot be ours save as we learn by love, in the secret ways of prayer, the intercourse of the soul with the Beloved.

The Incarnate Word sojourned in this world, and His life before men was a continuous revelation not only of the love of God towards us, but also of what it is possible for us to do who are surrendered to His love. And what a revelation it is ! We are led to contemplate it in the depths of pain and wretchedness as well as in the heights of rapturous freedom; in the ways of sorrow and penitence as well as in the peace and joy of the Divine embrace; in the ways of dark and painful discipline as well as in the light and glory of spiritual achievement. We are even taught that experience of the harder ways is necessary to the fullest understanding of Divine love; that there cannot be the desired union without the suffering of the Cross. As we perceive the Divine truth of love through the very contrasts of spiritual experience, we come upon the very secrets of saintly lives. And from our state of immunity we may behold the Saints; but shall we then be glad of our immunity from the suffering through which they followed their Lord in the way of perfection ? Nay, we shall rather feel the loss to ourselves. We shall want to know, and as love grows we shall not repine at the suffering which may be granted, but perhaps even desire it for the revelation of love which we perceive within it. We shall know that the glory of the love of Jesus could

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 19, 27.

not be what it is without His life of humiliation, without His Cross; and we shall see that glory of His love in His Saints and know it is because they, too, have known the pain of His Cross.

To have attained even to this knowledge, which is after all to know what we, too, may become, is to have been taken ourselves into the very way of that glory. It is not ours yet, but we are being shown the mystery, taught the principles, and permitted to behold the vision of love. Are we able to go forward? Can we bear the question of the Beloved, as addressed to ourselves : “*Are ye able to drink of the cup that I (drank) of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I (was) baptized with?*”<sup>1</sup> Happy are we if already love prompts us to reply, “Yea, Lord, we are able.” We may reply thus before the full knowledge of the Way has been gained. But the teaching of love is progressive, whether through pain or joy. No one attains to the fulness of it save through experience, and experience is largely concerned with our personal willingness to do and to bear. The brave, courageous soul merits the wider vision, and it is not denied to him. It is the heroic soul who desires fellowship with Christ in His sufferings;<sup>2</sup> but to him it may be given to know the very heights of love in the unspeakable experience of the Saints.<sup>3</sup>

The glory of love in the Incarnate Word must be sought, and will be certainly perceived, in every manifestation of His power, and in every action and

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xx. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Phil. iii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.

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word in relation to men. We must endeavour to trace for ourselves the unfolding of the vision of that glory as the Gospels reveal it, and as the Church has understood it, and the Saints have attained to it. But it must be no mere study. We must seek to know in order that we, too, may follow in His steps. We must be prepared for the demands of love, and unafraid when called to endure some test of love. We must not shrink from the darkness of Gethsemane or of Calvary, nor hesitate to follow if we are led to the height of Tabor. We must be simply loving, obedient, steadfast, humble; while above all things seeking to give *love*. The vision is not for contemplation only; it is the life to which we are called, presented in all its attractive beauty in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we love Him He will impart to us with His love a certain clearness of understanding, and withal such a replenishment of love that we shall will to follow where He leads.

• • • • •

O Almighty Father, Who through the Incarnation of Thine Only Begotten Son hast revealed to us the eternal purpose of Thy love; Grant us so to follow Him in the holy ways of Divine love through all the days of our life here upon earth, that being made perfect in Him we may be accounted worthy to behold and adore Him in the glory of His love, where with Thee and the Holy Ghost He ever liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen.

## II

### The Glory of the Love of Jesus in His Earthly Ministry

#### I

THE Incarnation and Mission of the Eternal Word constitute the most stupendous act of Divine love revealed to us; and the greatness of the act is not lessened because of its marvellous simplicity. God's ways are always simple in their very mightiness. His love is simple because it is one and eternal. It is so entirely of Himself that He is even declared to *be* love. Therefore every act of God as it proceeds from Himself is an act of love, simple and pure. In God we do not contemplate degrees of love, but love in simple perfection. Perhaps we may even dare to say that there are no separated acts of Divine love, but that those movements which to us appear as separate acts are so co-related as to be but so many expressions of an act which is eternal, ceaseless, and necessary. The glory of love is therefore the glory of God. If we ask, How may we both perceive and understand this glory? how shall we ever attain through clear thinking, by deep meditation, or by most pure aspiration, to the right conception of it? we reply in the words of the Apostle : “*God, Who*

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*commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.*<sup>1</sup> In another place S. Paul gives the key to this verse : “*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.*<sup>2</sup> We have then both the revelation of the glory of Divine love in Jesus, and also in ourselves a corresponding gift of love whereby we may understand the revelation. This infused love is ours, and we have but to use it in order to gain a clear interior knowledge and vision of the glory of the love of Jesus, which is Divine love.

We draw near to our Lord Beloved to contemplate His earthly ministry. And we do this in virtue of the infused gift of Divine love. We use the gift within ourselves in the endeavour to understand the love manifested in Him. On our part the action may be one of the will and not of fervid impulse. It must be so in many cases, as with the Saints who persevered in will through long years of arid discouragement. But we are rewarded by certain clear intuitions of glory, that is, of the wondrous secret perfections of the love manifested in the words and actions of the Incarnate Lord. We are able both to perceive and appreciate them, even when we are constrained to own our own hardness of heart, and the lovelessness of our interior dispositions. This is the fruit of that infused love without which we could not so appreciate the evidence of our Lord’s life. Perseverance in this endeavour under all the trials of our way will certainly

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 5.

lead to such perfect realization of the glory of love in Him, that our own life in love will correspond to the perfection of His life—the shining forth of His glory will guide our acts of love. We shall know within ourselves in what the glory of love consists; and that will be more to us than the formulation of some imperfect definition; for no human formula could perfectly contain the truth of that glory. The knowledge of the glory lies within the realization of love.

“*The glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ :*” that is what we desire to behold, not only that we may admire, but also that we may by a true correspondence be conformed to it. There is no part of our Lord’s life which does not appear in the effulgence of the glory of love. We cannot, however, do more than consider the salient features of His earthly life. Love was expressed in every word, and gesture, and action; but it was love which, through all its simplicity, was directed with fullest consciousness to an end which our Lord kept in view. He came to effect the primary purpose of God in our creation, that is, to exalt us to union with God. If we keep that purpose clear in our own minds we cannot fail to see the connection between His words and actions and that desired end. Thus He led souls to repentance, not by harsh denunciation of sin, but by the revelation of love which attracted them towards better and higher ideals. He made them feel that love was the only true expression of life; beside which, all that bore the trace of sin appeared too vile to be desired and sought

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any longer. In the light and atmosphere of His love the very secrets of sinful lives were disclosed. "*He told me all that ever I did,*" <sup>1</sup> was the testimony of one. "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,*" <sup>2</sup> was the exclamation of another. But such revelation to itself of an erring, sinful soul did but awaken love. For a moment the soul caught the ray of the glory of His love which captivated it. It has been so again and again, not only in the experience of Saints, but also in those complete conversions which have in countless instances testified to the living power of His love.

S. Mary Magdalene is pre-eminent among those who loved our Lord. In her is seen the effect of the recognition of the glory of the love of Jesus in her deep contrition. Her contrition was the immediate fruit of the love which raised her in will and purpose and aspirations above the sins of her past. She saw them as they were, she loathed them, she forsook them. His love, so compelling and generous, so compassionate and encouraging, met a certain want or necessity of her being. Great sins are sometimes committed in a reckless seeking for satisfaction. It is difficult to judge a soul in such a case. But the Heart of Jesus feels for such souls in their hidden grief while He gently wins them from the enslaving sin. Great penitents become great lovers of Jesus. Similarly our Lord won S. Peter to penitence. When he had thrice denied his Lord and his heart felt the bitterness of his sin, the hollow peace which his falsehood had won,

<sup>1</sup> S. John iv. 29, 39.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke v. 8.

he was ready either to be won to repentance, or to fall yet lower; and then, "*The Lord turned and looked upon Peter*"—again the glory of love flashed forth, and the Apostle went out to weep alone; but the tears of penitence are the tears of love. And when another day was over, His last of suffering, our Lord's love won another to repentance. The dying robber found the love, owned it, confessed, and was saved.

Could we know every detail of our Lord's dealing with souls during His three years' ministry, we might marvel at the number of spiritual failures among those who were at first touched by His words. Many souls learned the nature of their sin as the Truth of His love was perceived; but not all persevered in penitence. Perhaps among those who went away from Him were some who knew their sin, but left Him lest His love should claim them. That is not an imaginary attitude, for some even now turn away, afraid of His compelling love. And some would defer their conversion if they could, loving too well the pleasures of their present state. Like Augustine, who put off the day of grace : "Lord, make me pure; but not yet!"

Here, then, we have a revelation of the glory of the love of Jesus which, it may be, we need to contemplate again and again; for contrition may be renewed. We do not always love our sins even while we continue in them. Might not our prayer be directed towards that aspect of His love which discloses to us a way of life far removed from that wherein we are? Can

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we not, with true desire for something better than we have, beseech Him to show Himself in love to us, and kindle within our hearts a love worthy of His Own? If we honestly repent, and truly seek the love, it will not be denied us. Indeed it is always ready; but we bar the way to our own hearts by our love of other things; or we are afraid to adventure anything in the spiritual life. Generous and courageous souls find the love that is hidden from the self-loving and timorous who will not break from the habits which bind them. They perceive it as something winning and gracious, a very glory of love rejoicing in its object. In every penitent our Divine Lord and Redeemer sees "*of the travail of His soul.*" The new light and life which have sprung up within that soul were won in His deep, dark dying upon the Cross. It is of the very essence of love that it is most gloriously exultant where it has agonized in sacrifice, when the purpose has been attained. So the love of Jesus for the true penitent is a joyous love. Penitence is the evidence of love. That is the point to be noticed for our encouragement. In the soul of the penitent our Lord seeks and finds, not the bare testimony of sorrow for sins committed, but a love which answers to His Own Heart's desire for love. When we are surprised at the radiant happiness of a pardoned soul, let us not reflect upon the greatness of sins past as though the present happiness were but presumption, and therefore inconsistent with a sense of sin. Jesus and the soul have met in love: love in the penitent forsaking the deeds of sin and renounc-

ing the will to sin; love in Jesus which counts not the pains He has endured for that soul for very joy of its return in love. That is the glory of love in forgiveness. The present obliterates the past.

But this is no imaginary glory in our Lord Beloved. It overflows to the hosts of Heaven: "*There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*"<sup>1</sup> How wonderful is that love of Jesus for the *individual*, that such an outburst of joy should celebrate the flashing of the glory of His love as He is "satisfied." Behold, thus, the fruit of contrite love: joy in the Heart of Jesus, joy among the holy Angels, a flashing of glory, a thrill unspeakable in the very court of Heaven.

In our penitence we need all the encouragement this may be to us. We shall not do penance less earnestly because the glory of the love of Jesus fills our souls. The great penitent Saints illustrate for us the truth of this. As they did penance and mortified themselves in loving desire to avenge in themselves the wrong done by them in the past, they were impelled by the joy of that glory, and not by morbid failure to grasp the reality of their forgiveness. And they were the more inundated with love as they attained to purity of spirit. We need to learn from them; for we are apt to let the exercises of penance overcloud the joy of our absolutions. Let us keep the joy while striving through penance to attain to inward purity.

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xv. 10.

## II

In our Lord's attitude towards human suffering we have one of the most tender of all the revelations of the glory of His love. We may speak of His pity, compassion and mercy, without perceiving that glory. But in truth He so touched human suffering that every occasion which called forth His pity and sympathy received its own distinctive illumination. In every instance our Lord had regard for the individual, the needs, the weakness or the strength, the faith or the doubts of the sufferer. By His words and acts He gave the encouragement needed that the sufferer might be raised above his own weakness to rest in the consciousness of a strong love reaching out to him. To each one was given a glimpse into the reality of love which gave them confidence. Pain, disease, sorrow, bereavement, alike were brought beneath the touch of His illuminating love. He willed to bring to these sufferers the knowledge not merely that He sympathized and pitied, but rather the knowledge of the glory of His love. When one seemed to forget His very words and their meaning under the influence of a great sorrow, He said : "*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*"<sup>1</sup> It is this manifestation of glory which we are to perceive for ourselves.

The experiences of those days are renewed in the sufferers of to-day. The mystical element apparent

<sup>1</sup> S. John xi. 40.

in the spiritual direction of all our Lord's dealing with them is evident to us also if we are prepared to take His teaching as it applies to ourselves. Every example recorded in the Gospels will meet the case of some soul to-day. We cannot renew the scene, there may be no miracle, no spoken word, and yet that pain, or sorrow, or distress may be to us the means, the way, to the revelation of the glory of the love of Jesus. We may in His presence accept the word that applies to ourselves. That word tells of His direct care for ourselves, His personal love. Can we not make a response of *love*, of *faith*, of *hope*? Can we not pursue the thought to which He awakens us? It may mean for us, as for some of old, a real forsaking of the self, so subtly strong in times of suffering, in order to reach after and win that selfless love to which *His* love attracts us. It may mean the quickening of our perceptions of Divine love and its demands. It may be the occasion of a great change in our spiritual attitude towards Him. But that secret mystical development is also a joy, for the soul has caught a ray of the glory of love and is in some higher way a disciple. And the disciple has often a work which is only less than that of an apostle. When we have caught the glory of His love in some time of physical or mental distress, we have become disciples of love, and there has been opened out to us a future of love. We have a mission to fulfil. We must live in love that its glory may be seen. We may become, and God grant it, Apostles of love. As the blind man, having received his sight, "followed

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*Jesus in the way,*"<sup>1</sup> as the delivered demoniac at His bidding preached the new deliverance,<sup>2</sup> so the soul that has found the love becomes a new power in the world.

There are elements in human suffering which, until they are transformed by love, tend towards spiritual incapacity and defectiveness. The soul neither receives nor utters spiritual truths clearly. Suffering that is not understood and turned to account in the soul's life obscures the light of Divine love; and we have the spectacle of a soul evading sanctity; for we have it on the testimony of one of the greatest of the Saints: "Sufferings endured for the love of God are the true road to sanctity."<sup>3</sup> But the "*natural man*" does not readily accept such teaching concerning suffering, nor does he understand the necessity for mortification. We learn both its value and its use by supernatural light. That which our Lord sanctified through His Cross, and has made resplendent in His Saints, must have a significance all its own, a mystical development perceptible only by those whom our Lord has won to His Own love. How many souls must have been penetrated by that mystic light as He dispelled the gloom of bodily and mental pains. And so it is always. When the sufferer meets the Beloved in simple faith He is wont to give the evidence of His love as it may be seen in relation to the sufferer's own needs; and so the light is an interior ray directing the soul to that work of love which is its proper response to the revelation it has received. It is their

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark x. 52.    <sup>2</sup> S. Luke viii. 38, 39.    <sup>3</sup> S. Teresa.

obedience to this Divine intimation which made the Saints as pre-eminent in holiness as they were remarkable for suffering. They were rewarded by their Lord Who manifested in them the glory of His Own love. He did not always take away the suffering, but He rewarded the courage of His servant by a greater manifestation of love.

A question remains that deserves to be answered. Why do quite holy persons often suffer, as we think, unjustly? Why those apparently unmerited sufferings? We recall the long trials of the Saints; their sharp persecutions; their labours; their weariness; and all the varied happenings in which they were to taste the bitterest dregs of suffering, mistrust and calumny, opposition and scorn of others. We see something of all this repeated in the experience of some whom we account as undeserving of such distresses. We ask, Why all this? There is a mystical reason which should content us. Through their suffering those souls are being now conformed to the suffering life of Jesus; and as their likeness to Him grows here upon earth they are prepared for that glory of His love in them which will be eternally the splendour of their sanctity.

It is true they are not ambitious of glory, they are too humble to account themselves worthy of it. Their one desire is to respond through their suffering to that love of their Lord which lures them along the way of the Cross; while He on His part encourages them with love past expression. He meets them in most interior ways and gives them love so hidden

and spiritual that only by their confidence do we know it; and so they live as if in pursuit of suffering. It is no morbid attachment to mortification that holds them to the Cross; for these great souls are not unhappy, nor even lacking in simple gaiety; they are lovers of the Cross because they behold it always in the glory of the love of their Lord. They pay no heed to its roughness and hardness of outline; for the glory transfigures its most repellent features. But for all that *it is the Cross*, and they feel the burden of it; and not all at once do they perceive its worth. Many are the hard struggles, and the bitter hours of depression, through which a soul attains to the mystical knowledge of the glory of the love of Jesus manifested to His faithful ones. But the vision is sure to the soul that will persevere in love, and use the sufferings as steps in the ascent to that summit of sacrifice where the glory of love transfigures the offerer, even as our Lord was in His life before men transfigured. They saw the works, they were witnesses of countless acts which proclaimed His love; but how many considered the suffering, the labours, the weariness, of Jesus? How many readers of the Gospels are mindful of those elements of suffering beneath the record of His deeds and words? But does not the glory of His love flash with increased brightness when they are remembered? In Him the triumph of love through suffering is complete.

In our Lord Beloved the glory is perceived in the love which no suffering could change, and no sorrow obscure. It is in contemplation of that fact that we

realize our failure and understand the cause. We approach our trials with too much self-love, and too little of Divine love. Self-love would avoid the pain; Divine love would conquer it. Here we mark the wide difference between the attitude of the world and that of the Saints. We are often more the friends of the world than we are prepared to own even to ourselves; and we incline to the world's opinion of suffering. The Saints are disciples of the suffering Son of Man. They see how He maintained the law of love as the very principle of life and conduct. He put love before all things. Labours, weariness, distresses were always met and endured in love, therefore they became transfigured. And as we read the Gospels it is our Lord's gracious words we hear; His charity, His courtesy, that we mark; but it was often the suffering of His soul which made the occasion. Thus the teaching of our Lord's life from this point of view was the triumph of love over every form of suffering. The Saints follow Him. They love Him. They realize that love must be tried ere it is perfect; and experience proves that on His part there is so great a desire for the soul's love, that often He will increase the love while He permits the trials to be multiplied. On their part we may observe a certain energy coupled with a particularly clear understanding of His love, a peculiarity which is absent when the trial is less severe, and the sense of love less keen. As the love rises in power so it is tested to the uttermost, and happy are they who at all times maintain the supremacy of love. Such are they who, like

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S. Paul or S. Teresa, are hungry for suffering because already they are glorified in love.

### III

The world is not sensible to the glory of the love of Jesus. The two conditions which have now held our attention, penitence and pain, appear to be the very hardest of acceptance. They negative the life of fashion and pleasure. They are contrary to the world-spirit. But so also is that love which is manifest in our Lord and His Saints. He would let the glory of His love shine forth in souls renewed through the Sacrament of Penance, cleansed by His Precious Blood; He would reveal Himself in the countless sufferers all around us; but He is denied the opportunity. The love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not known. Supernatural graces are not understood. The Sacraments are empty forms to very many. And souls are pining in secret for the saving message. The love that makes penance the means of spiritual advance, of brightness and generosity; the love that makes suffering subservient to virtue; this is what we need, and this is what our Lord will effect in us if we will but correspond to His Own life's teaching. Then every penitent and every sufferer will reflect His glory of love.

Is it too much to expect this to become the aim of souls freshly awakened to the perception of the Divine love of Jesus and its possible effects in themselves? They should strengthen themselves by prayer, by

meditation upon the love of our Lord. They would quickly discover that its glory is discernible in all He did, and yet does, for the souls and bodies of men. With souls thus enlightened they will perceive the direct way of love for themselves. Love must become strong by its own action; that is, by the way we show Him our love. Is love a matter of feeling? It is still more a matter of action. What will love do, and bear for the Beloved? What will it dare for His sake? What can it achieve for Him? It must be all for Him. The glory of His love cannot illuminate our souls, or the world through us, if we do not forsake our self-love. There is far too much *self-seeking* even in our religious practices; and many lives are ineffectual for God for no other reason than this. The need of the time should find expression in the prayer: "O God, give us Saints!" But we must not thus pray without ourselves following the way of the Saints. May it not be that God will answer the prayer by making saints of those who thus pray? A Saint is a lover of God. A Saint is the beloved of God. What higher state can we desire? How can we become all that is so implied? By simply loving, not by doing great things, or thinking we can do them; but by being simply loving, towards God first of all, and then towards all others for His sake. Forsaking sin because we love. Labouring because we love. Suffering in the power of love. Attaining through love.

And what of the hidden part, the secret between the Beloved and His Own? To have known the love of Christ, whether through penitence or suffering, is

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to have penetrated the secret of His love for the souls of men. We can never truly know His Sacred Heart except by those means. The truth of this may be tested by the experience of the Saints. There is that in the Sacred Heart of the Beloved which He holds for us all as a treasure won through His Cross. It is that infinite perfection of love, of fellow-feeling with the sufferer and the penitent, which resulted from love's sacrifice, and will glow eternally in love's glory. The joy of participation in love so pure is sufficient to have made of penitent and suffering souls the great Saints whom we revere for the glory of the love of Jesus manifested in them.

What has been our own growth in the knowledge of Divine love through our own penitence and pain? Is there nothing for us to gain by a careful examination upon those points, followed by renewal of love? Can we be more courageous in love? "*She loved much,*" was our Lord's approving remark of one soul. If we, too, love much we may have also a share in her blessedness and peace.

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O Lord Jesus Christ, Who through all Thy labour and suffering for men hast revealed the perfection of Thy love and illuminated the world with its glory; Grant us so truly to perceive, and so faithfully to follow, the guiding of its holy light, that we may attain to the fulfilment of the very purpose of Thy love within ourselves; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

### III

## The Glory of the Love of Jesus in His Passion

### I

THE glory of the love of Jesus was indeed manifested throughout His earthly ministry; but it was in one sense preparatory to that which was to be the supreme manifestation from the Cross. His teaching was progressive. He taught love. And love when it is true rises by its own aspiration towards some noble achievement. Without the revelation of love's power through His Passion His teaching of love would have been incomplete. Those souls which had embraced the teaching would quickly have perceived some higher ways for its exercise wherein they would need more than ever His guidance. We must therefore believe that our Lord as He approached His Passion thought of those secretly loving souls to whom the manifestation of His love through the Cross would become an inspiration. Thus He privately taught His Apostles and prepared them for that higher work of love which He would presently accomplish.<sup>1</sup> It is true they did not understand; but neither do we when first the necessity and certainty

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. Matt. xvii. 12, 22; S. Mark ix. 30-32; S. Luke ix. 28-26, 44.

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of the Cross is represented to us. The whole revelation of love through the Passion was so stupendous as to need in souls a great preparation. It is an ideal to which few aspire. It is perhaps for this reason that the fullest understanding of the Cross in relation to love, both in our Lord and in ourselves as His disciples, has been reserved to the great Saints whose heroic love exalted them to a certain oneness of spirit with Him. But this love is not denied to any faithful soul. We may ourselves so learn from the Cross that we "*may know the love of Christ,*" and realize its power in ourselves.

Two degrees of love are disclosed by which we may ascend to the knowledge of the love of Jesus in His Passion, and perceive its glory. And the first degree is defined by the personal sense of that love which every soul should acknowledge : "*He loved me, and gave Himself for me.*"<sup>1</sup> He loved each one from the moment it had its being. God could not create any living thing for hatred ; for that which He creates must in some way correspond to His Own nature, which is love. When He creates an intelligent being, a living soul, a spirit, there is added the attribute of immortality : "*God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His Own eternity.*"<sup>2</sup> And again, "*Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love : therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.*"<sup>3</sup> When, therefore, we say "*He loved me,*" it must be with remembrance of this which has followed us all

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom ii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xxxi. 3 ; cf. S. John iii. 16.

the time of our existence, yea, which was in God before we existed. And we have been ever precious in His sight because of that love. Not even our sin could destroy the love, but rather called forth a more wonderful proof of it. He loved me, and when I had sinned His love rose to the urgency for my salvation. Nothing was too great. The loss of a soul was in His sight so appalling that He could withhold nothing. He would give love to the uttermost, but He could not do that without giving Himself, and so "*He gave Himself for me.*"

We only begin to realize the cost of that stupendous act when we have proved the costliness of love's finest acts in our own lives. We have given to the uttermost, and have been ready to lay down our lives—the greatest act of all<sup>1</sup>—to save another. We have even witnessed the sacrifice which one soul can make for another. And there flashes then upon us a glory of love, surpassingly bright. It is a ray from the glory of the love of Jesus in His Passion. If the glory flashing forth from an act of pure human love is so beautiful, what of the glory of pure Divine love, and pure human love, seen in one act upon the Cross? If the loving action of an imperfect soul be so truly glorious, how much more the action of the sinless Incarnate Word! If we understand this within ourselves, the glory of the love of Jesus through the Sacrifice of the Cross inspires an undying devotion, and withal a certain readiness to suffer which develops into actual desire for suffering, as in the case of many

<sup>1</sup> S. John xv. 18.

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a Saint. This is a degree of love not often seriously contemplated; and even when understood, who of us may not be held back by the shrinking of sensitive human nature? The Cross is heavy as a burden, and is only made glorious when love takes it into its own service.

The Saints are agreed that meditation on the Sacred Passion is of first importance in a devout life. The fruit of such prayer will surely be an increase of love, invigorating, penetrating, and yet it is, after all, but the *first degree*. Must we own to ourselves not only that multitudes have not attained to it, but also that *we* are not quite sure of our own stability in that degree? The personal note is too often lacking, and religion loses its power. The life is not redeemed from its shadows by the glow of the glory of the love of Jesus.

The second degree of love by which we ascend to the love of Jesus in His Passion is that which we attain through perception of that great purpose of God towards mankind for which we were created, and which He would not set aside even when we had sinned. He willed the perfection of the race through the perfection of individuals. For this the Eternal Word became Incarnate; and to this He aspired as Son of Man—the completeness,<sup>1</sup> or perfection, of souls in union with Himself. This aspiration may be regarded as the sustained intention of His whole life on earth. It is apparent in His words and actions, and becomes only more intense as His love rises to the

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 10; Ep. i. 6.

supreme act of the Passion. Thus He aspired to the perfection of the race through the act of Atonement. And so in particular to the perfection of individuals. And when we have attained to the first degree of love whereby we acknowledge our personal share in the fruit of His Sacrifice, "*He loved me, and gave Himself for me*"; when it has been sealed to us in the grace of absolution; we have yet to contemplate our Lord in His great love aspiring to our perfection. We may say He not only desired that we should be washed from our sins, but also that we should become holy, that is, Saints.

We must not stay by the way, content if our sins are forgiven, but "*go on unto perfection.*" And that will be as for the Master,<sup>1</sup> so for His disciples, through the cross-bearing, which is the test of love. In very deed the Passion is renewed in everyone who in Heaven will be known as a Saint. Therefore as we are called to follow our Lord in the way of the Cross,<sup>2</sup> we should do it not with feeble and lagging steps, but with a strong spiritual action as we likewise aspire to the perfection of love. To follow our Lord Beloved faithfully is to have one mind with Him, to will, and aspire to, not only our own perfection through the Cross, but also to will, and to aspire to, the perfection of the Divine purpose for all mankind. This, speaking generally, distinguishes the Saints from those Christians who, having little love, have no vision of the glory of love to which the Cross would lead them.

We need this expanded view of the love of Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heb. ii. 10, v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xvi. 24.

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in His Passion if we are to apprehend aright the glory which invests it. We need it also if we are to have a clear view of what is possible to ourselves in the way of love. If we have no vision we can have nothing that will make aspiration a joy. We aspire to that which attracts and moves us, to that which will reward effort, to some promised possession. The very conception of the Cross in the spiritual life is of that nature, it presents a vision of love perfected in glory, and to that the faithful disciple will always aspire.

## II

Our Lord Beloved "*for the joy set before Him endured* the Cross."<sup>1</sup> But we are not to think of it as an accidental joy. It is not even the joy of victory, and of final triumph as such. It was the joy of love within itself in the glory of its own Divine achievement. Nothing could be a joy to Him that was less than the fulfilment of the eternal purpose of love. If we limit our thought of His joy to the outward and recorded circumstances of His victory we shall perceive something less than the great reality. We must know the soul of the victor if we would appreciate his joy. So in contemplation of the Passion of our Lord we should know something of His mind as He entered the lists to vindicate eternal justice and love.

We must follow with reverent love as He withdraws from His Apostles and enters alone where the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

dark shadows of the olive trees accord with the deepening shadows upon His soul. He is about to make a tremendous decision, a stupendous act of self-obliteration and surrender. Within His soul is the clear intention of love. He knows to what exaltation of Divine joy that love aspires. It is all before Him. He sees it all; and in the pureness of His soul He anticipates it. Contemplate Him as for a moment the certainty of Divine joy thrills Him; as the watching, silent, adoring Angels behold that marvel of love; as the great Angel of the Agony, His Own Guardian Angel, in eager love draws nearer; as that thrill of joy is succeeded by the agony of a great sorrow! The darkness and horror of human sin have fallen upon Him. He has said, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,*"<sup>1</sup> and now that sorrow, with all the poignant anguish of His perfect contrition, bears him down. His love is the measure of His anguish. But not thus can His love be satisfied. There must be the surrender of His human will: "*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.*"<sup>2</sup> Not once, but thrice must that prayer be made, ere love is satisfied with its own surrender. Ah, Lord Beloved, how hard is that inner necessity even to Thee! Hard, even when the Angel had strengthened Thee! Hard, for see, Thy Blood falling to the ground attests Thine agony of soul!

What are we to say? Was there a doubt of the issue? Nay! But love's choice, love's determination,

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxvi. 38.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke xxii. 42.

love's glory had to be reached by its own supreme dominating action in the presence of the black magnitude of the world's sin. Love conquered, and as during the previous weeks He had "*steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem,*"<sup>1</sup> so now He set His face to go up to Calvary. He came forth from Gethsemane, His raiment stained; He had "*trodden the winepress alone,*"<sup>2</sup> in His sorrow; and He came forth in the dignity of His Divine sorrow, calm and strong, and in a way transfigured by His surrender. The glory of love invested Him, and not all the succeeding hours of tragedy and shame could change it. He had made His act of love there in the darkness of the olive shade; He would make it again in yet deeper darkness; but the calmness of soul declared the certainty of His love. And the great Angel followed with profounder homage to Incarnate Love.

But are we contemplating a far-off action, or really entering into that in which we have a part, or share? have through our sins, our sorrows, a share in that which made for our Lord Beloved the great burden to which He in Gethsemane submitted? Then too we have through our love a share in His great surrender! Gethsemane is the prelude to Calvary, for the disciple as for the Master. At some time or other we must enter that garden—*alone!* Thither, into the deepest shadows may no one go with us; for love must contemplate alone its great venture, and understand the joy set before the valiant soul. Is it some great necessity in our own spiritual life? Something

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke ix. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lxiii. 8.

against which our weak nature rebels? Some call we hesitate to obey? Some sacrifice that must change the whole life? Or is it that we must become mystically a burnt-offering, to be wholly consumed in the flame of Divine love? In some way the force against us will be at times so strong that we too shall cry, "*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me.*" And are we distressed when there is no relenting apparent in the insistence of love? "*Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done.*" Do we realize that the surrender of the will is really the acceptance of love's way? Let us, as our Lord did, fix our eyes upon the end, contemplate the joy set before us, the joy of vindicated love, and we shall be strong.

The way of the spiritual life is after all the way of the Cross; and our true strength for the way begins with our surrender to God in identification of ourselves with Him in will. If we have gained the supreme victory over self which this requires, the opposition and persecution of the world will not frighten us. So long as there remains in us anything of self-will the world has power against us; we are not sure, not confident, but hesitating and fearful. In that case how unlike our Lord we are. Contemplate Him: self-possessed, calm, majestic, gentle. He was thus because of that perfect love the eternal joy of which was already assured. That perfection of His love was realized in one-ness of will with the Father. Yet how He suffered! Body and Soul endured together to the uttermost all that had power to hurt, and wound, and torture. And His followers must not

think to escape pain even though they experience the joy of love in interior ways. The surrendered soul is an object of attack. Spiritual enemies are watchful; and they ally to themselves our human enemies, and worst of all, our human friends, making the suffering harder. But when we have to stand, as it were, with our Lord while the world judges us, let us preserve the pure intention of love in holding to the will of God. Love is glorified through the Cross.

But that is precisely what the world rejects, even with the examples before it of the Saints who have followed their Lord to the victory of love. The world loves its own way, the easy, self-indulgent way; the world has no place for the Saint in its economy. It has been ever so. The Scriptures bear witness to the arrogance of the world, and the meekness and suffering of the Saints. And one aspect of the worldly mind is this : an utter disregard of spiritual teaching. This has always been, but the present day is remarkable for a certain refined worldliness which approves natural virtues and declares them to be sufficient. The witness of the Cross is to the necessity of supernatural virtues. The ideals of the world are not the ideals of Christ, and of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Cross once raised on Calvary must witness to the supernatural life of grace and love until our Lord returns in the fulness of the glory of His love. That Cross must be exalted in the life of every Christian. The world that cannot be won by speech and preaching must be won by examples of holiness multiplied a million-fold. The prayer of Lacordaire : "O Lord,

give us Saints," may well become our own. But if we pray that prayer, let us offer ourselves to be God's first answer to it. Saints? Yes; and martyrs also! It is the martyr-spirit that perceives the glory of the Cross. The martyr of Christ is no fanatical religionist, but one who follows his Lord in love along the way of the Cross, exhibiting unconsciously the virtues in a supernatural way. He is a witness for his Lord even unto death. It is this witness of souls in union with Christ that must prevail above speech. In the hours of our Lord's trial He testified as much by His silence as by His words. He was Himself the Witness for love and truth. Words may affect others; but it is the life that convinces.

### III

Was ever life so convincing as that of our Lord on earth? And yet He was condemned to the Cross. That Cross which marked the way of shame and suffering by which He would advance to His triumph of love is for us illuminated by the glory of that love. The way of the Cross was in very deed the way of Sorrows; but at every step love was conquering. The very stages of the way declare this. If love had not conquered at every step, the increasing pain of the way would have made the supreme act on Calvary impossible. The Cross was the ending of the Passion. Our Lord received it when already He was worn and exhausted by the long night of suffering, and finally by the scourging, itself an almost fatal infliction. The

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very succession of His sufferings needs to be remembered if we are to be encouraged to follow Him. When some added indignity, as we suppose, follows upon some overwhelming trial of soul, let us not see in it anything but the call to greater interior love. Our Lord accepted the Cross; He carried it; He fell beneath its weight; rose up again in the greatness of His resolve; submitted to be fastened to it; then to be raised by it, lifted up between earth and Heaven; that which became His Altar of Sacrifice, became also, symbolically, the means of His exaltation. Thus is love glorified; it goes "*from strength to strength,*" until it stands alone and supreme in its essential glory.

If we understand these stages in the Way of the Cross, we shall see how each faithful soul must follow our Lord Beloved. Each stage will mark a development of love through victory. How great the soul must be that after bearing the Cross, yea, after falls, can yet so conquer through love as to be willing to be bound to it, yea, to be offered upon it! Only love can do so great a thing—a glorious love that commends the Cross.

But the Cross of Jesus was the Altar of Atonement. On the Cross He completed His act of penitence. The Son of Man became man's perfect Penitent. It is love that makes penitence possible. A soul sorrows for its sin in proportion to its love. How inconceivably great appears this perfect penitence of the Incarnate Lord when we attempt to measure the act by the love, or the love by the act! In that supreme

act of love He embraced the whole guilt of mankind. He alone could make that act; for He alone was capable in His sinlessness of so mighty an act. And we observe, moreover, that tried and proved love is always the most tender in contrition, because it has been rendered through its trial and victory supernaturally sensitive to the guilt of sin. Our Lord in this tenderness of contrition exhibited in the highest degree that which is a common effect of love in the Saints. Thus as Son of Man He prevailed in penitence. But worthy contrition is agony to the soul. Therefore the contemplation of the perfection of contrition in the Soul of Jesus as He endured on the Cross reveals a depth of sorrow and pain inconceivable in its intensity. And there is to be added to this the aggravation of satanic malice. The enemy pressed upon Him with every refinement of physical and mental torture; for He as Son of Man tasted death for every man.<sup>1</sup> The greatest Saints have experienced this malice of the enemy as the time of their death drew near; and our Lord as King of Saints led the way through that labyrinth of conflicting pains, for He was in all things "*made like unto His brethren,*"<sup>2</sup> and "*tempted like as we are.*"<sup>3</sup>

If we would try to penetrate yet further that mystery of love's agony, we must make the attempt in contemplation of the dereliction. What is there presented? Darkness enveloping the forsaken Christ. For a moment the Father's face was averted . . . the Angels waited, awed, expectant. . . . Love was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heb. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

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left, that by its own act it might burst through the oppression of agonizing darkness to be revealed in its own glory, more than ever glorious because it had conquered. "*My God, My God ! why hast Thou forsaken Me ?*" That was the supreme moment. All that followed was in confirmation of victory. All was consummated. And as Son of Man He commended His Spirit to the Father—His Spirit more glorious than ever in the radiance of love's victory. "*Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit.*"

Thus was the glory of love revealed. Thus is the Christian taught and encouraged. The glory of love is in the purpose of God to be seen one day in the souls of His redeemed; and it will be seen in varying degrees of brightness according to the likeness of the individual to his Lord. If we love Him we may be sure our love will be tested by the Cross. The question for us is not : What shall we have to endure ? but : How can I be true to love ? Let us be determined within ourselves *that we shall conquer*, then the glory will begin to glow within our souls. But the enemy will pursue us, relentlessly, maliciously, until the end. What can we do therefore ? We may say, I will seek to bear all in patience by the grace of God. The Saints have gone beyond that. Assured of the Cross they have desired the pain of it, because they were eager in love. They would be not passive sufferers, but warriors and victors through love. This spirit of the Saints is well illustrated by the following :— S. John of the Cross was travelling in company with another friar, Fra Martin, and on the road he said to

his companion, "What would your reverence do if we were now travelling amidst infidels, and they were to set upon us and beat us?" "Bear it patiently, I hope, by the grace of God," was the answer of Fra Martin. "Bear it patiently!" cried the Saint with a holy indignation; "is that your way? Why not desire it, and even to be cut in pieces, for the love of Christ?"<sup>1</sup>

This was the way of the Saints; and we see how closely they resembled their Lord. But when we consider ourselves in the way of the Cross, such heroism appears too sublime for our limited power of love. And, moreover, the ordinary conditions of life in these days appear to us unfavourable to the spirituality of the Saints. But has it ever been otherwise? No; it is not in the world and its conditions that we must look for encouragement or expect inspiration. We must begin with the fact of love within our own souls. The glory of the love of Jesus, the glory of love in His Saints, presents an attractive vision; but it is not spread out merely for our admiration. We have been called to the way of the Cross in order that the eternal glory of love may be enhanced through our victory also. There is no glory of love save through its own victory. There is therefore a personal obligation which each one must contemplate for himself. Perhaps we might do that best by contemplating that attitude of the Saints in the light of some words of S. John of the Cross. He says: "The gate by which we enter into the riches of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of S. John of the Cross*, p. 217.

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knowledge of God, is the Cross." We treat the Cross in our own experience too much as though it were an obstacle, and not an open way to the very Heart of the Beloved. We are too ready, even when practising the virtues under suffering, to permit a lurking displeasure in our hearts at having to suffer. Let us rather aspire to that finer degree of love which can despise the pain for the joy of proving the love of the Sacred Heart, the very treasury of wisdom and knowledge.

The obligation of love is to be true to itself. What can it accomplish for the one loved? Short of that achievement there can be no satisfaction in love. What can we accomplish through love for our Lord Beloved? We cannot have satisfaction in His love if we make no effort to that end. Many are they who in the way of the Cross are self-loving. They exhibit what S. Catherine of Siena described as spiritual self-love. They desire the fruit of love, but without pain, without that secret and hidden sacrifice of the self which is the truest proof of love. Pain, labour, and weariness provoke a certain resentment which robs good actions of their merit, and makes life lustreless. The glory of love is not there.

If we are self-convicted of such failure in love, we need no longer wonder at our failure under suffering, or discipline in the way of the Cross. Love as it prevails counts the pain as nothing for joy which overflows to it from the Heart of the Beloved. With such love He is alone served.

When we read of Saints that they were great

lovers of the Cross, that they rejoiced in suffering and tribulation, we must understand it was through no attraction to pain for its own sake; but that they regarded it as a test of love, and a means whereby they could make a more perfect spiritual sacrifice of themselves in love. Even as our Lord Himself embraced the Cross as a means to the perfect oblation of Himself in love, so His true followers look to the highest that love can attain and pass swiftly by the constraints of merely natural emotions, to the exercise of love in supernatural ways.

A question arises here concerning this supernatural love in the Saints, and indeed in all who are conquering the natural love of ease in the spiritual life, and aspiring to true self-sacrifice. Is every Christian called to this supernatural degree of love? The answer is, Yes, and no one can become perfectly holy without it. The prevailing acceptance of a lower standard of Christian practice tends towards a mistaken and false view of spiritual obligation. People are not eager to become Saints. They regard such ideals as too high, and in fact unnecessary. But our Lord calls us to take up the Cross. He would not have bidden us to aspire to a share in His suffering if there were no peculiar privilege in sharing in His victory of love. Whatever may be hereafter revealed through those souls who are in union with Him in love, this certainly deserves some careful thought; there must be for mankind, by the will of God, such an identification with Him in His eternal love that some vast conception, or purpose, awaits for its complete-

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ness, and perhaps also its power, the day when the roll of the Saints shall be filled. The purpose is that of the glory of love made perfect. We may perceive it and feel its attraction when we are moved by supernatural love to attempt some harder thing in the way of the Cross. To feel in any such act our nearness to our Lord, to experience some intimate association with Him through the Cross, to know both the inspiration and the reward of love, is to know how far removed from all former conceptions of life is that of the love we have found in the Heart of Jesus crucified. It is to know within ourselves the secret of the glory of His love.

. . . . .

O Saviour of the world, Who on Thy Cross didst triumph over Thy suffering through the greatness of Thy love; Make us, we pray Thee, so strong in our love for Thee that we may be found worthy of the fellowship of Thy suffering and the victory of Thy Cross; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## IV

### The Glory of the Love of Jesus in His Risen Life

#### I

THE glory of the love of Jesus glows with peculiar radiance as we contemplate Him in the victory of love upon the Cross. But the Cross is not the end. After His victory over sin comes His victory over death. If in the one the glory of love is perceived in the perfection of atonement, in the other it is to be found in the peaceful freshness of renewed life. It is marvelously simple as all things in God are simple; but its simplicity may not be perceived by us before we too have had our Gethsemane and Calvary. It is the simplicity of love tested and proved. While in some respects it is a glory which may rest upon the soul that is faithful in earlier efforts, it is more especially the glory of the Saint who, in the dark night of the soul, has met his passion and tasted the mystic bitterness of the Cross. It is therefore with realization of all that was laid down in the previous chapter that we pass to the consideration of the next manifestation of the glory of the love of Jesus.

We must contemplate it in our Lord's Resurrection, for in His Risen life He manifests the love which they

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will best understand who have shared the Cross with Him, and have been made like unto Him in His death through their own mortification and death of self-love; for we are dealing directly with the facts of mystical life, as certainly as with facts of history, when we concern ourselves with the manifestations of the Risen Lord. While the Apostle bids us remember that we are called to "*walk in newness of life*" because of our Lord's Resurrection, and we are able to do this as we are faithful in every-day Christian practice, we must also remember that degree of spiritual life which the Saints understand so well, but which is very much higher than many appear to assume. Many read the mystical writings of the Saints without appreciation of the real character of the states depicted, or of the necessary spiritual fitness of the soul that can be raised so high. We must avoid that mistake if we can.

The revelation of Jesus during the forty days after His Resurrection was made to those who had to some extent received the revelation of His love through His Passion and Cross. It was a revelation of love to those who loved Him. And that indicates its importance. Whatever was its evidential value to mankind as a whole, it was clearly of the greatest spiritual value to His disciples in their several degrees of experience and attainment. It called them, attracted them, to the next step in the mystic way. Thus we find Him conversing with some individually as their spiritual state required, or as they were prepared for His guidance. The several incidents as

recorded of the Forty Days, came as appeals to their experience. The Risen Lord is Master. He teaches, He discriminates, and to each person He communicates just that particular truth which is necessary for their guidance as they take the next step in the way of perfection. Only as we so regard Him may we understand why to one He grants what He denies to another; why to one He speaks in the high language of mystical thought, and to another in more common ways of elementary teaching. But in this way He grants a revelation of the glory of His love, very beautiful and tender, fresh and inspiring. It is the glory of love within which is revealed the spiritual development of *life*. But it can only be rightly apprehended at the apex of our spiritual attainment. We must know where we stand, and be clear in spiritual purpose. The vision is for each one of us according to our need, and if we are true to ourselves we shall not miss its inspiration. The vision is given to those who love.

Our spiritual development should proceed from the point at which we now stand in the way of perfection, and our own understanding of the teaching of our Lord, and especially (as we are now considering) His recorded words during the Forty Days. They should be carefully applied to our present spiritual condition. We must not assume that we have the spiritual capacity of advanced souls, nor imagine that we are prepared for the peculiar graces which we admire so greatly in others. This does not appear to be always remembered by aspirants to spiritual per-

fection. Self-love always inclines us to desire graces for ourselves because of the pleasure we may find in them, or the supposed advantage to be derived from them. But humility is the surest preparation for the favours of God. Better were it to humble ourselves with Peter in his penitence than to imagine we have the lofty devotion of Mary Magdalene. If we are lowly and contrite the Risen Lord will come with His word and revelation of love. He must be the judge of the degree of our devotion; and He is unerring in the directness of His word. If we find in our self-abasement a consuming love, He will reveal Himself to us according to that love, and will direct us to the higher ways of the Risen Life. And we shall perceive that what He reveals is really *new life*, springing out of that death to self which was effected through our conformity to His Passion.

This is indeed to understand the whole teaching of the Forty Days in a mystical way. It is a mystical experience which might be ours year by year as we pass from Passontide to Easter. But it has also its value for all souls in the way of perfection; for it rests upon the normal experience of the passage from the status of a disciple to that of a proficient in the spiritual life. The soul that really responds to the teaching of the Risen Life has passed in some sense through an obscure night, not necessarily that full and profound experience which S. John of the Cross has traced for us in his own wonderful way, but still in some degree a dark night of aridity and pain. To them the Easter message is a call to go on from the

point gained to the higher and more perfect love which our Lord reveals.

There is a glory of love awaiting every such soul in its love and steadfastness. If it has been touched by its light while following in love along the way of the Cross, it is now to rise with the Beloved to a new outlook of love and a new glory. True, it must be in the old familiar ways of life; but as all who met the Risen Lord had a richer sense of life as they re-entered the social order of their own day, so we, living under familiar conditions, are yet to be so touched by the light of the new life that a new glory may transfigure the old ways.

And all who attain to that glory will have in themselves the glow of Divine love, the very same that from the Risen Lord shone within the hearts and lives of those who became the first Saints of the Catholic Church.

## II

We may briefly trace this mystical teaching of the Forty Days through our Lord's dealing with His disciples and others individually, or in groups. And we begin with His appearance to S. Peter.<sup>1</sup> The Apostle had experienced such anguish as only contrite love could endure. After his third denial "*the Lord turned and looked upon*" him. His love was re-awakened and he went out into the night, the natural darkness a fit symbol of the darkness of his soul as he

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 5.

contemplated his sin. If we may infer anything from his subsequent conduct, that is, from all he appears to have been from the time that he appeared again among the Apostles and taking his place, it is that the intervals between his awakening and the time of the Resurrection was one of spiritual darkness under a sense of sin, only relieved by the memory of that look of his Master. This is true to ordinary mystical experience. The obscure night has at least the alleviation of some remembered season of grace and love, although such comfort may appear to the soul as deceptive. But love in the soul of the penitent endures because it finds some satisfaction in contrition. The darkest moments are reached when the sinner perceives the end of his own resources of reparation. Was it at that time of suffering, when the soul of Peter was sunk in the knowledge of its own insufficiency, that the Risen Lord appeared to him? It may have been. Then the glory of His victorious love touched the soul that had died to its sin, and revealed the upward way which could be followed "*in newness of life.*" When the Apostle found again his brethren, it was in the grace of that conversion which he was bidden to employ to their advantage. The glory of the love of Jesus had rested upon him, and he had absorbed its rays, and henceforth it would be his inspiration.

Consideration of the love of Jesus towards true penitents must always lead to wonder until we see in that love not only the confirmation of all He has effected for souls through His sacrifice and death, but

also the completeness of the soul's restoration, seeing it is held within the glory of His love, and even made a sharer in it in virtue of its own death unto sin. Thus early in the deep experience of love does the mystic way open out to the soul, and the higher life appear in the light of a Divine glory.

When the Risen Lord met the holy women returning from the empty sepulchre, He greeted them, "*All hail!*" and even permitted them to express their wonder in privileged acts of adoring love. The Angel had told them of the Resurrection, and now He stood before them. What were these women? Devout and loving souls, they had ministered to Him of their substance, their possessions. They had followed Him in the joy of service. They had looked from afar upon the dark happenings upon Calvary. Their love had been strong and their faith true, as their presence at the sepulchre proved. They were active souls, and in them the mystic sense was probably less fully developed than in some others whom the Risen Lord would meet on that first day. They do not appear, however, to have been as yet very far advanced in love, because He permitted them to express their devotion in a way that indicates a certain reliance upon sensible consolations. He acted towards them with recognition of the degree of their love. And this He always does. He grants that which for the moment is the chief need of the soul. We have here shown His way of love towards souls in the mystic way, and it affords us a light upon our own experience. The glory of His love rests upon the soul and raises

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it to a certain joy in Him. There is a higher expression of His love for stronger and more advanced souls ; and these loving and tenderly ministering souls will grow in love and attain to a degree of strength which will enable them to bear His test of love where now they receive His consolation in sensible ways. How we love the experience of the one, and shrink from the touch of the other ; but in the glory of His love there are rays so pure that only disciplined souls can bear their light.

In S. Mary Magdalene we have one whose love was of a different order. She had left the earlier stage and had attained to a degree of ecstatic love which was to raise her to pre-eminence among the Saints. But her suffering was proportioned to her love. To her the whole period of the Lord's Passion must have been in very truth to her soul an obscure night of anguish. In the simplicity of her love she knew not her own strength. We perceive it as the glory of the love of Jesus rests upon her. In the garden she sought Him. By the empty tomb she lingered, her soul torn by the anxiety of love. But love in its suffering is very quick to discern. Greeted by the Angels she tells her grief, but waits not for their consolation ; only her Lord Beloved could satisfy her heart. How wonderful is the love that turns even from Angels to search in loneliness for the Beloved ! And yet so glorious are the Angels that to turn from them showed an almost inconceivable love on Mary's part. Blessed Angela of Foligno remarks of some Angels seen by her : " I took delight and joy in the

presence of the Angels, and never would I have thought, unless I had seen it, that the Angels were so pleasing, and that they could give such joy unto the soul." But for all their beauty Mary turns from them; then she finds Him, or rather is found of Him. But only when He is fully recognized by love does she cease to question. This was indeed to pursue the mystic quest. "*Mary!*" . . . "*Rabboni—Master!*" And then, checking the impulse of her love: "*Touch Me not!*" It would appear at first sight strange that she should be denied the very privilege accorded to the other holy women. But rather it is a recognition in her of a higher degree of love, beyond the need of sensible consolations. She is called to action. A mission is entrusted to her. The glory of His love rested upon her, He tested that already-tried love and found it worthy: *she could forsake herself to serve Him!* Her love found satisfaction in obedience, and that is ever a mark of sanctity. Looking out upon the spiritual way, she must have descried the heights of love to be approached through the pain of self-denial—the pure vision which only strong souls may contemplate. And bravely she essayed, as all her after life proved. The heroic love which characterized her life may be expressed in the words of Gerlac Petersen: "I will keep faithful to Thee, and I will rejoice in my poverty, and I will in no way admit any consolation until Thou reveal Thyself; but the tears of mine eyes, both inward and outward, shall flow more freely, until they reach even unto Thy presence, and my

tears shall be my meat day and night until they who trouble me see and feel that ‘Thou art my God and my refuge,’ and that Thou hast not wholly forsaken me; but that by hiding Thy Face Thou hast proved me, whether or no I be found faithful.”<sup>1</sup>

Such souls by the purity of their love penetrate deeply into the glory of the love of Jesus, for their love is like His in its Divine aspiration.

The meeting of the Risen Lord with the Apostles on the first evening disclosed another aspect of spiritual attainment which needed the illumination of the glory of His love. They loved Him, and not all the dark horror of the Calvary could have quenched the light of hope which love inspires. Tidings of His Resurrection had aroused them to wonder and expectation; they assembled in obedience to an impulse of mutual sympathy and concern, a simple psychological movement—and our Lord chose that time, and appeared. “*Peace be unto you.*” Here was no questioning, but a revelation of Himself to hearts only awaiting conviction. “*He showed unto them His Hands and His Side.*” The glory of His love was manifested. In deep reality it completed the spiritual work which had developed within them during the suffering of the three days that had passed. In view of the commission with which our Lord immediately entrusted them, we must conclude that they had so passed through the darkness and trial as to need only the grace of that revelation of His glory. His words, “*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I*

<sup>1</sup> *Divine Soliloquies*, ch. xiii.

*you,"* presented to them an ideal of the glory of love which would become their own—but through yet more intimate experience of the Cross than they had as yet known.

It is always so. When we have reached that degree of preparedness through pain and darkness, our Lord floods our souls with the glory of His love; but it is always the path of closer conformity to Him that we discern. Like S. Paul, we know it must be pursued with definite desire to "*know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.*"<sup>1</sup> Thus is the glory of His love revealed in the inspiration to seek that conformity. It is not a desire for external resemblance through visible suffering: that could hardly be; but an inward likeness through the realization of the hidden power of love that in origin and purpose is supernatural and Divine.

And how truly our Lord Beloved discerns the love which is stronger than reason! S. Thomas doubted; but his love was more real than his doubts. The revelation to him was the glory of love in the Sacred Heart of Jesus; but it was a glory to be understood, as always, through the secret knowledge of the mystery of the Passion. How many souls there are who are afraid to trust their love, because so much is suggested to encourage doubt! Love *really has knowledge*, and it should be trusted. Perseverance in love will lead to the fuller revelation of the Sacred Heart, "*My*

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 10.

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*Lord and my God."* Do we say S. Thomas believed because He saw the Sacred Wounds? Was it not rather that his love rose to that which completed its own aspiration and confirmed his intuition? The glory of the love of Jesus passed into his love and made it burn with the love of His Own Heart.

There are earnest, devout souls to whom the necessity of the Cross is not a clear revelation. They are disappointed in themselves and distressed when their religion is found to be unequal to the shock of some great and painful trial. They are like the two disciples whom the Risen Lord found in the way to Emmaus. They were loving disciples, but, like so many of their time and nation, had not understood their own Scriptures which taught the necessity of the Cross, and a suffering Christ. To them, and to all who like them have missed that essential truth, the Risen Lord comes and reveals the truth with inexpressible tenderness through the glory of His love, and He reveals a transfigured Cross; not to blind our eyes to the hard facts of pain, but to make us willing through love. The soul that truly loves, and on whom rests the glory of the love of Jesus, will not shrink from the Cross; for it will perceive it as the means to the highest ends of love. Well may hearts burn as the Lord Beloved communicates His secret of love even through the reproof which so gently discloses to us our misconceptions and faulty weakness. The two disciples had yet much to learn through experience of the Cross, but we cannot suppose that the inspiration of that wonderful time was lost, but rather that they

were found worthy at last to share that glory of their Lord.

Who of us is shrinking from the painful way of the Cross? Who is unwilling to admit its necessity? Let us bow to the gentle rebuke of the Risen Lord while He opens to us the secret ways of His love and reveals the glory of it. Are not our hearts cold and our eyes closed to the vision because we have missed the truth, or have not accepted it? As we embrace the teaching of the Cross, the Beloved makes Himself known in the glory of His love.

Another experience of the mystic way is illustrated by the appearance of the Risen Lord by the Sea of Galilee. S. Peter and his companions were pursuing their calling as fishermen on the lake. After a night of fruitless toil they were returning, when Jesus, for the moment unrecognized in the dim greyness of the dawn, called to them, and gave them directions which they followed with great results. Then S. John recognized him; and, as we think, was more quick to do so because more alert in his love for his Master. In the way of the spiritual life there are dull and apparently fruitless seasons of toil. And they test the soul's sincerity to the uttermost. But the Beloved is often nearer than we think. If the soul be trained in love He is recognized through the dimness, and His Divine refreshment restores the spiritual energy. This suddenness of His appearing has been observed by the Saints, who have understood it as His way of encouraging His loved ones to watch with expectant love. This belongs to the higher training of the soul

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that has passed through much darkness and pain, and has thereby been strengthened in love. He would have us faithful in love when He is hiding Himself; then when He presents Himself again love will recognize Him—" *It is the Lord!* "—and that meeting of love is a further revelation of its glory.

The last appearance of the Risen Lord, recorded in the Gospels, was also the occasion of His Ascension. In the Apostles is to be noticed a high degree of love, showing how rapidly they had progressed in the mystic way. They could *rejoice* for His sake. Parted from Him, they were yet filled with a great joy. This was a wonderful degree of love. Before them stretched the years of toil, suffering, persecution. Before them all was the possibility and even certainty of martyrdom. But it was all as nothing in the joy which filled them. The glory of the love of Jesus was even then within them, and for Him they could dare anything.

Here is an ideal of love for us. And it discovers to us one reason, perhaps, why life is so cheerless amid the sufferings and trials of the way. We have not begun with the joy of a great love. But that defect may be made good. The mystic way is after all a reality; and if we steadfastly set our faces to pursue that way to the very end, which is the consummated glory of love, we must know it will be no *easy* way. Our strength lies in the love which, rejoicing in the Beloved, counts nothing too hard that the days may bring. When the dark, troubled, painful days come; when we are afraid, because of unlooked-for happenings in our life; then let love rise to its

own, and as we look only to Him, strong and prevailing in the present glory of His love, we shall see the track of light and shall be able to follow it. As those Apostles met their deaths as martyrs with the joy still filling their hearts, so we may approach the end of our own course with joy; for will not He Whom we love above all things reveal Himself glorified in His love?

There were other appearances of the Risen Lord not less wonderful in revelation of the mystic way. Such were His appearances to His Blessed Mother, to S. James, to the great assembly of "brethren," but we must leave them to be meditated upon by individuals as they may be led. In all cases it must have been the revelation of the glory of His love to those who in some way had been trained to the higher understanding of the Cross, and were ready in their several degrees to respond to His call to pursue the mystic way—the Way of Divine love.

### III

The glory of the love of Jesus as revealed in His Risen Life illuminates the mystic way, and gives encouragement to every soul in whom love has awakened to the realities of the way. If we love we cannot but realize the necessities of the way, for love in its aspiration is not blinded to difficulties. But wherever we stand in that way, some ray from the glory of the love of Jesus touches our feet, revealing the straight course which we are to follow. We are

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not unaware of difficulty, and that is perhaps made clear to us through the very goodness of God, Who will perfect our love through discipline, seeing that only a strong love can support an abundance of graces.

With the revelation and teaching of our Lord to guide us, we look out upon the way extending before us. What do we behold? A vision of life wonderfully illumined by the glory of the love of the Risen Jesus. Apparently there are many pathways leading into and through that which is spread out before us. We see others winding their way: penitent souls, ministering souls, loving, prayerful souls; some eagerly responsive to teaching; some recipients of great graces; some wholly absorbed in the love which attracts them. All around us are souls in some way making their response to love, some are aglow with its fire. We feel they are possessed of true understanding; they have caught the Spirit of the Beloved, and His love is their joy. And in the midst of it all where are we ourselves? We are not excluded. Our place is with those eager, loving souls. Let no one stand aloof from the great spiritual movements. Diffidence or faithlessness must not be found in us if we but know that the vision of the Risen *Life is for us because* we recognize within ourselves the motions of love. The light, the love, are for us also. We are not singular, nor alone; we are, for all the proofs of our individuality, part of a great whole. That vision of life upon which we gaze will be understood in its beauty only as we severally take our allotted places in the sum of life. Others will be affected by

our correspondence to the love of our Lord, and we may find others necessary to our own understanding of life. We must not miss our own opportunities through gazing with envious eyes upon another's zeal for God, or his evident sanctity. We must begin by taking our places at once, where we are. As love has led us, as by suffering we have learned, as by consolation we have been comforted, or by discipline have been strengthened, by grace renewed, so at the point of our present attainment should we aspire in love to love. We should pursue the way before us, looking unto Jesus. The glory of His love rests upon us now, and every true act of love, and earnest willing to go forward, will advance us. We must have the courage of love.

And we shall need courage. Our Risen Lord permitted the glory of His love to rest upon souls while yet imperfect; He developed the mystic teaching until the marvel of His Ascension gave a glimpse of yet diviner splendour. But He left His Own in the world that they might through their own experience learn the secret of the glory. For some great labours, for all suffering, for most martyrdom, that each in his own way might be made conformable unto His Own Death, and so be capable of sustaining the life of glory. And so for us all there is the call to endure for our Lord's sake; and as we look out upon the vision, there is no attractive ray of its glory that does not suggest some pain of discipline to ourselves before we can be glorified by it. But we are not for that reason to fear. One to whom that vision was

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clear wrote out of the deep experience of suffering and persecution : “ *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.*”<sup>1</sup> The glory to be so revealed in the Saint is that of love—His love perfected in us.

Let us not, therefore, waste time in contemplation of our weakness; neither let us hesitate because of dangers. We enter the kingdom, *our* kingdom, through tribulations. Let love rule in the heart and the glory of our Lord Beloved will be already in us, prepared against the Day when He will “ *come to be glorified in His Saints.*”<sup>2</sup>

• • • • •

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who through Thy glorious Resurrection hast called us to newness of life; Grant that we may both perceive and follow the way of Thy love, and also attain to that to which it leads; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Thess. i. 10.

V

## The Glory of the Love of Jesus in Heaven

### I

JESUS ascended into Heaven. Mortal eyes beheld Him. He took our nature, His Own Human Body, to the throne of His glory. Angels testified to that ascension and glory. Thus briefly is the truth declared; but the glory we contemplate is boundless. We behold a glory of Divine love prepared for from the beginning in the counsels of the Blessed Trinity. It is, so to speak, an increased brilliancy of light proceeding from the essential glory of the Divine love, as the assumption of the Sacred Humanity of the Eternal Word consummated the purpose of the ages. The predestined exaltation of the creature to abiding union with God was effected when the Word became Incarnate. And, the earthly manifestation ended, Man was at length exalted to the Throne in Heaven. He is there at the very centre and heart of celestial life. The light of Heaven is the glory of God; and that glory is manifested in Jesus as the Lamb.<sup>1</sup> It is revealed to us as a spiritual glory and light which only illuminated souls can appreciate. We must be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rev. xxi. 28.

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ourselves aglow with that same love if we would contemplate it aright on earth, and hereafter enter into it. But the light of it is already within us, the glory of it already invests us, in so far as we have responded to love, and attained somewhat in the way of its perfection through the Cross, through death to self, and through participation in the Risen Life of our Lord Beloved. We are encouraged by the revelation of His glory, and aided by His prevailing intercession.

But we must notice that the Assumption of our Lord to His Throne of Glory appears to have been by way of ascent from glory to glory. If the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost synchronized with the session of the Incarnate Lord at the Right Hand of the Father, there is an interval of nine days during which His gradual ascent was made. If this be not assuming too much, it suggests a great deal for our instruction. If it may not be held as a matter of faith, it attracts as a vision to which our hearts respond.

Our Lord's triumphal way began as He rose from earth in the sight of His assembled Apostles and others. That very moment marked the beginning of the Angelic welcome. It is not difficult to imagine a chorus of praise accompanying the most pure adoration of those perfect spirits, which became more wonderful in love as He received the homage of the several Orders of the Angels, culminating in the profound worship of the Seraphim. We may so imagine the ascent of our Lord as love assists our understand-

ing; but no one could so follow Him as to perceive more than will suffice to guide devotion and stimulate love; for the glory of His Ascension as witnessed by the multitude of Angels, the glory into which the Angels themselves were taken, could not have been endured by souls as yet imperfect. Is it merely fanciful speculation if we ask: Do the nine days which succeeded the parting of the Lord Jesus from His Own on earth coincide with the nine Orders of Angels? It is unsafe perhaps to go further than this, remembering the origin of the Catholic adoption of belief in the nine-fold Order of Angels; but the thought is a helpful one, as containing an expansive conception of the Heavenly Kingdom to which we are ourselves called. Another question may be asked: Does this convey to us anything concerning the degrees of holiness to which the redeemed will attain? We do not suppose an equality of holiness hereafter. If the opinion advanced by some be true, that in some way the Angelic Hierarchies correspond to those degrees of Christian sanctity, we have an encouraging thought. Our Lord by His Ascension from height to height of glory made each His Own and for His Own. The glory of each degree is none other than that of His love. In the Father's House are many mansions, stations or resting-places, and not one is without the touch of His Hand, or the light of His glory.<sup>1</sup> He is and ever will be their light. The vision is expansive; at its centre is Jesus our Lord Beloved on the Throne of His glory.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. John xiv. 2, 3.

In contemplation of that glory of the love of Jesus we associate ourselves with Blessed Mary, with the Holy Angels, and with all the Saints, who adore Him not only as He is in the glory which was ever His, but also in that which is peculiarly His as the Incarnate Word; that is, the glory of His love perfected in its expression through all the experiences of His earthly life. It is the glory of love which has not only endured and energized *for* man, but also *with* man. There is within the glory an intimate tenderness, a note in which the love is personal towards individual souls. As the soul awakens to the glory which is His through the achievement of love it must join in spirit with the song of the Elders around the Throne : “*Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.*”<sup>1</sup> But that song of the Elders is something more to us than a *general* act of praise, however true and merited. We cannot join in it without feeling that the praise of all creatures in Heaven and earth, and that for ever, is due to Him for the saving of even one soul. We go further, and we say that for every act of love towards any soul, and towards ourselves especially, He merits to be praised eternally. Yea, even if a soul be lost, His love, which has been ever perfect towards that one, merits to be praised for ever. Something of each act of His love—its inherent beauty, its essential oneness with Eternal Divine love—passes into the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 9, 10.

glory which is increasing, and can never be lost from it. “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*”<sup>1</sup>

The Saints praise their Lord with an intimate sense of personal love and obligation. Hence the joy which is theirs. They adore Him in the glory of His love, in the rapture of union with Him. If we know the joy which on earth a soul may experience in some brief moments of realized union with Him, we perceive through His communicated joy a little of that which inspires the praise of the Saints. A little deeper reflection upon our obligations of love would lead to worthier praise and a more joyous participation in the worship of Heaven.

## II

As we meditate upon the glory of our Incarnate Lord in Heaven, we are moved by a profound sense of the unutterable love into which He was taken. That love had been through all His years on earth the possession of His Sacred Heart. But so long as He was, as to His Human Body, in this world, even after His Resurrection, there was a joy and glory of love to which He looked forward.<sup>2</sup> To that He ascended; into that He entered. As *Son of Man* He was received into the Divine glory of the Eternal Trinity, and into that essential love which is beyond the penetration of the Seraphim. Man is on the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S. John xx. 17.

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Throne of God. He receives the homage of the hosts of Heaven. That is the adoration of love. We cannot unaided contemplate the glory of His love as there manifested, although it should be to us one of the most absorbing realities. In the glory of Jesus we contemplate the destiny of mankind. His assumption to the predestined glory affected immediately the whole race. The Divine embrace of the Father and the Son is understood in the coming forth of the Holy Spirit with supernatural gifts for men. That *sending forth* of the Paraclete promised by Jesus may be understood as expressing that procession of the Holy Ghost which assumed a new characteristic when the Incarnate Word was raised to the Throne. Henceforth it is a procession both towards and within the soul of the baptized. His gifts constitute a Divine endowment. They are lights within the soul. They are empowering gifts superadded to grace whereby the soul may become perfect in the virtues. But especially do they enable us to realize what we really are as children of God in Christ. They are severally means of union with God because they are essentially love. They are Divine gifts conveyed to us out of the fulness of that glory of love into which our Lord Beloved was taken. They are marks of that exalted life which is ours in Him. We are by virtue of His Human Birth of one nature with Him Who is Son of Man. We are by virtue of that procession of the Holy Ghost within us, and by reason of His Divine gifts, made also partakers of His Divine Nature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. v. 1; 2 Pet. i. 4.

The vision presented is that of a peculiar spiritual glory to be shared by the whole human race. It is not the result of any process of evolution, for it is a glory which has descended upon us from a Divine source; it is the result of a divinely accomplished fact—the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, and the exaltation of our nature by the person of Jesus. We appreciate the glory as we aspire to the perfect development of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and through them to union with the Beloved. But this is no vague aspiration; it is to no ill-defined ideal that we reach forward. We behold it in our Lord Jesus Christ. As we meditate upon the glory of His love, we are encouraged by intuitions of the beauty of His Person. We feel the attraction of that beauty because it is the expression of love, and we *must* follow, for love has no halting-place in its ascent to perfection. If we love Him we cannot stay by the way. Howsoever we speak of the attraction of His love, or try to define its sweetness, we have but one thought : “*Draw me ; we will run after Thee.*”<sup>1</sup> But this pursuit of the Beloved is immediately rewarded. While by an action of the will we choose the path to His glory, we are at each step enabled to perceive and appreciate the essentials of that glory. Every grace of the interior life, every experience of His love, will increase our strength and we shall pursue our way with readier steps and holier joy. The Beloved of our souls will reveal Himself, satisfying the desire of love in each according to that which He finds in us. And we

<sup>1</sup> Cant. i. 4.

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should cherish this inner perception of His beauty; for it becomes to us a spiritual delight which we share with the Saints. For want of this perception we are conscious of our own poverty of experience as compared with them. Where we are blind and ignorant, they have vision and knowledge. But because we love we may approach to them, and with them share the glory of love within which we may "*behold the fair beauty of the Lord.*"

As we thus move forward in the spiritual way, love works mightily in the three powers of the soul—memory, understanding and will. The glory we contemplate is real; for it is the expression of love through the activities of the Ascended Lord. The gifts of the Holy Ghost enable us both to know and co-operate with Him in love. And this appears as a further exaltation of the soul towards the glory of His love when we consider His action as Intercessor. Assisted by the Holy Ghost we may contemplate His activity within that glory. That which declares the perfection of His love, proclaims also His right as Intercessor. His work of love has not ceased. The work He came to do on earth was consummated on Calvary. His work in Heaven as Intercessor will be consummated when His Mystical Body has finished the work He gave her to do.<sup>1</sup> As Son of Man, therefore, He is even now supporting the Church with effective love, aspiring to that glory of love which the Saints will share with Him.<sup>2</sup> Nothing less than this can be the purpose of His Intercession.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. John xvii. 4; xx. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S. John xvii. 24.

This thought of our Lord's present activity on our behalf is not cherished by us as it might be. Even where there is a great love between the soul and the Beloved, there is not always a lively sense of His love in its action on behalf of His Own. It would be far better for many of us if we realized the truth that never for an instant is the love He bears us ineffectual towards us. Into His strong purpose of love, into the prevailing act of love which constitutes His pleading for us, is taken that full and perfect knowledge of us, together with His aspiration for us, which is essential to the love which unites us to Him. We do not think of so many petitions inconceivably multiplied on behalf of all who are not yet perfect, but of an all-embracing, all-knowing love, within which every want and petition on our part meets with a response which becomes a direct movement of love towards the perfect fulfilment of the purpose of God in us. That action of love raises and strengthens us, and we can go forward with renewed courage.

And this is not an intermittent action of love. It is ceaseless; but it is conditioned by the constant variations in our needs, our moods, and our aspirations. How different would be our spiritual experience if we were but conscious of it, and practised ourselves in remembrance of it. It would most certainly lead to joy in spiritual effort, and to confidence towards God at once tender and strong. Prayer, under its influence, would develop towards those experiences of God which we know as mystical graces. We should not spend time in useless laments when

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days were hard with excess of trial. We should have an assurance of love which would forbid the suggestion of doubt, and lift us above our natural depression. Our Lord loves us, and we love Him. If that simplest fact of our spiritual life be realized, we can have no doubt of His activity on our behalf. We shall know it; for love will teach us. Indeed there can be no doubt at all when love rules. Perfect confidence and mutual interest make love between the soul and its Lord as simple as it is beautiful and exalting. The soul He loves is made partaker of His glory.

The perfection of the Saints is the glory of the Church; and the glory of the love of Jesus is the beauty of the Saints. The tendencies of modern life are against the love of God. It is harder to realize the ideals of Sainthood when natural virtues are acclaimed as all-sufficient, than when the contrasts of the spiritual life are more directly emphasized. That is our present danger. Our own times are not remarkable for great Saints. And the question for us all is a very serious one: Am I content with this state of things? Have I no ideal beyond the exceedingly moderate standard of Church life as it is to-day? Is the glory of the Saints the mere legendary brightness of fast-receding ages of faith? The life of every Christian should be an emphatic protest against such an attitude. But we shall never make that protest if we have no personal sense of the activity of our Lord within the glory of His love. "*He is the Head of the Body, the Church;*"<sup>1</sup> and if

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 18.

the members are not responsive to His Spirit there can be no achievement of His purpose. He is ever aspiring to the fulfilment of the eternal purpose of love declared in the creation and redemption of the human race; and it is the first duty of the Church, and of individual Christians, to co-operate with Him, not resting in anything short of the glory of sanctity.<sup>1</sup>

Our Lord's great act of love, which we speak of as His Intercession for us, prevails against the work of the enemy. As on the Cross He conquered by love, so now His love will triumph over all that which would destroy His Mystical Body. We may delay, or we may hasten, His triumph. In His act of Intercession He embraces the needs and aspirations of every soul for whom He died, and who have not yet been perfected. And so for all the faithful departed He pleads. We may even affirm that for them His Intercession avails to an extent beyond what was possible while they were in the flesh; for now there is no opposition to His purpose in them; they cannot sin; they love Him as never before; their aspirations are holy and in perfect accord with those of His Sacred Heart for them; their response to love is such that they progress towards that desired purity and perfection which will fit them eternally to reflect the glory of His love. Assisted by our offerings and prayers they realize with increasing clearness the movement of His love in their behalf, while between their Lord and themselves there exists such a profound secret of love that with inexpressible desire they are surrendered to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Col. i. 21, 28.

purifying action of the living flame of Divine love, welcoming the keenness of its penetration as they know within themselves the effect of its power. How precious they must be to the Heart of Jesus ! What joy unspeakable they share with Him as they pass beyond the state of purgation so pure that even the Divine fire of love finds nothing to consume. Made for ever one with their Lord in love, they are made beautiful within His glory. His Sacred Heart is satisfied at last, and they, who some time were wanting in the pure perceptions of love, are enabled to contemplate its mysteries and its secrets, and adore their Lord in humble expectation of glory.

### III

The life of a sincere lover of our Lord Jesus Christ should be directed with a clear sense of all that He now is in His glory. His exaltation in the eternal glory of love does not remove Him beyond the reach of our love. He is, and for ever will be, MAN. His Incarnation has secured to us both the right to love Him and the power. Not to love Him is to fail altogether to perceive our own spiritual dignity. It is to miss the central idea which all down the ages has found mystical expression in the experience of Saints. The profoundest thought of love dominating souls has ever been that of union with the living God. God is ever living. When we make use of that expression, "*the living God*," it is because of our own vivid sense of Him, a lively feeling of Him. The word

conveys the thought of experience and not of faith alone. Sublime as this conception is, it is always presented in terms of human experience, individual and personal. The soul realizes itself in a simple and single relationship to God. The relation is one of love; and love is before all things an intimate and personal fact of relationship between persons. Upon that fact there rests the entire experience of God within the soul. It is as real in the beginner as in the proficient; as real in us now, if we love Him, as in the highest of the Saints; only in the Saints we see it in their developed consciousness of all that He is to them, and in their perfection of love. This should encourage us when we feel our weakness in love, and confess the feebleness of our aspirations. We are called to that very way of love; to know ourselves as beloved of Christ, and humbly to avow ourselves His lovers. Then between the lowliest in the Church on earth and the Beloved on His throne of glory there exists the fact and secret of love. There is nothing to prevent the final consummation of that love while the soul remains faithful. It is desired and anticipated by our Lord, and should be desired and anticipated by us with increasing joy as spiritual experience confirms us in knowledge of Him.

As the first effect of our Lord's Ascension to the throne of His glory was the coming forth of the Holy Ghost with His gifts of power, we place the proper use of those gifts as the first effort of the empowered soul to correspond to the activities of His love. Every gift of the Holy Ghost confers power upon the recipient.

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The soul is made strong to pursue the spiritual way, which is none other than the way of love. As the gifts are used with a clear purpose they are proved to be effectual means for our advancement towards the desired union with our Lord. The gifts being supernatural we are by means of them able not only to aspire to God in directly spiritual ways, but also to receive from Him those secret communications by which He teaches and directs us. The relation of the Christian to God is a highly developed condition, the result of the Incarnation. It is a relation of spirit to Spirit.

These sacred gifts are tokens from Him Whom we love. We approach Him with increased capacity for love through every one of them; and He regards us as so prepared for the love He is ever ready to give in more abundant measure. He is the soul's Beloved, and it is in no vague manner that He makes known His love to us. He declares it; and if we would perfectly know it we must take account of His declaration. He Whom we thus dare to call "Beloved" is to be adored in His Divine Nature, which is "profoundly hidden from all mortal vision and every created thing" in the Bosom of the Father. But this thought alone, while it leads us to the infinite perfections of the Son of God, seems almost too high and too remote for our present comfort. The glory of His love must be to us a nearer vision if we are to live in simple relation to our Ascended Lord. And in that we find the wonderful provision of love in the exaltation of His Sacred Manhood. We love Him

*God and Man*; and so loving Him may aspire to the wondrous height of the vision of His glory in that eternal Being and life wherein God is to Himself the love that no creature can fully know.

We love Him Who through all the effects of His Incarnation is revealed to us in the glory of His love. And this love mutually given is confirmed in that we feel it to be nothing less than a sacred pact between the soul and Jesus. It is the most precious truth, the most glorifying fact in our lives. We by love enter into a solemn engagement with the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Incarnate Lord. To know Him as our soul's Beloved should be the high purpose of love within our hearts. We must ever more seek Him where in His love He is always manifesting Himself. For the present we leave the thought of His objective presence in the Blessed Sacrament. We have now to consider particularly His spiritual action of love in relation to ourselves.

While we contemplate Him in love, let us beware of forgetting His hidden and secret presence *within* us. "We must remember that the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is hidden in essence and in presence, in the inmost being of the soul."<sup>1</sup> So S. Paul says : "Ye are the temple of the living God."<sup>2</sup> In order, therefore, to correspond rightly to the action of His love, we must seek Him within ourselves, and there hold converse with Him. This has been urged again and again by Saints, as S. Augustine : "I found Thee not without,

<sup>1</sup> *S. John of the Cross*, Sptl. Cant. i. 7.    <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 16.

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O Lord, I sought Thee without in vain, for Thou art within." This is not very readily received by many; but if they would cease their weary efforts when in prayer they do not find Him, and look within, they would more often find the comfort they seek. They would find Him.

After Communion, in the secret understanding of our prayer, we may so truly know Him, love Him, adore Him, in that hidden presence, that the notion of distance will be lost. In His love for us He seeks this interior communion, even delighting to rest within the heart that loves Him. This is a truth known to those who prepare for and expect Him. The preparation is in love; and He rewards the faithful lover.

This realization of His indwelling passes into another experience, that of the soul's hiddenness within His Sacred Heart. As we, conscious of His presence within ourselves, withdraw from all created things and abide with Him, He so possesses us that we are lost to ourselves in Him. We cannot be His Temples, we cannot adore Him on the Throne of the heart, and not be ourselves more and more taken into His Heart. That is the experience of growing union with Him. The brightness of the love which exalts us is the glory of His love.

But in this life our imperfections hinder us from perfect love. We long intensely to be purified from the effects of our sin, that we may become perfect, and so be able to offer worthily the homage of love. Our anxiety is great, for our Lord is ever showing us

that in Him there are infinite treasures which as yet we cannot receive. He is so glorious that as love between the soul and Him develops towards its desired perfection, we begin to aspire more simply to that more hidden glory of His love in the Bosom of the Father which at first appeared beyond our reach. Indeed it even appears to the loving soul that all that is given now and here is far less than what it conceives would be its satisfaction; for all experience of the Beloved in this life falls short of the fruition for which the soul longs with increasing desire. Hence the aspiration of the faithful lovers of Jesus is the perfect possession of Him as love's eternal reward.<sup>1</sup> They seek Him for Himself alone. This explains that action of certain great souls—so strange to less ardent lovers—who seem to regard all His gifts and graces as but partial, and to be left in their eagerness for Him alone. Nothing that is partial, whether in gifts or revelations, can satisfy them. They must press on with hearts set on Him alone; and they will not rest short of the consummation of all in His glory.

The perfections of our Lord Beloved as we trace them in the secret ways of devotion include all that is essential to His Divinity. His glory and beauty are disclosed to us in the simplicity of His love towards us. And we only aspire to that which we know intuitively is for us to know. Yea, we so understand Him that we know He is aspiring towards that very perfection of love in us. He wills to give all that is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gen. xv. 1.

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His Own to us as we give to Him all that is ours. Thus our Lord Beloved in His glory desires the love of His redeemed. Thus He prepares for the day when He will be glorified in them.<sup>1</sup>

We lose the joy of all this when we do not maintain the simple relation of love between ourselves and our Lord. But religion devoid of this lacks the brightness and the force which properly it should have. We are called to love none other than the Son of God, Who to win us to Himself reveals to us the glory of His Own love through every possible manifestation of it both to us and within us. The Holy Spirit witnesses to it within our hearts, inspiring and assisting us, and bearing upward in His Own ineffable manner the very desires which of ourselves we cannot express.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

O Glorious Lord Jesus Christ, interceding for us in the power of Thy love; Grant us to become one in heart with Thee, that in our lives we may show forth the praise of Thy glory; Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 2 Thess. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rom. viii. 26.

## VI

### The Glory of the Love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

#### I

THE glory of the love of Jesus is manifested in the Church on earth. We are not left to the contemplation of it in Heaven only. There is a nearer manifestation of it in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The glory of that love is perceptible in every one of the Sacraments of the Church in their respective degrees; but in the Holy Eucharist Our Lord manifests forth His glory. As this becomes more evident through increasing devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, there should follow a quickening of faith and a kindling of love in the hearts of men. An obligation of love rests upon all to whom the presence of our Lord is a continual joy and inspiration.

Our Lord's Own assurance, "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,*"<sup>1</sup> finds its fulfilment in His abiding presence in the Blessed Sacrament. It cannot be through any accident of Christian life, or some misdirected devotional sense, that the Church enshrines His presence always and not merely

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

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when Mass is celebrated. We believe the Holy Ghost has directed the Church to that veneration of her Lord's presence with her. He is always with us manifesting the glory of His love. He abides with us in Divine humility more profound than that of His human life on earth. His love constrains Him. The increasing devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially where there is reverent Reservation, witnesses to a truth which needs to be insisted upon : that, namely, of His Holy Incarnation, the very foundation of our Christian profession. Our Lord is making His presence known in the most wonderful way. It is not by protestation, nor by much preaching, that the truth is communicated, but rather through *experience* souls are growing into a deeper sense and realization of His presence.

The presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is attracting souls, converting them, teaching them, elevating them. Where the Blessed Sacrament is fitly and consistently honoured there is more abounding spiritual life, a profounder sense of the supernatural, and a calmer joy in religion, and there especially are to be found in souls very dear to the Beloved, with deep experience of His love, and intimate knowledge of Him. In the midst of spiritual activities which reveal His love as souls are prepared for it, many are progressing in sanctity towards the exalted ideals of the Saints. Much of this is hidden. In the nature of things it must be so. Saints are made as they respond to the secret operations of Divine love; and

who may declare the wonders manifested within the silence of that life which our Lord lives in the Blessed Sacrament of His love?

On the other hand, and speaking quite generally, where the Blessed Sacrament is not exalted the people take on ordinarily a lower spiritual standard in their religion. This may be denied, and the contrary asserted; but the fact remains that there is a real difference of spiritual outlook, and in the one case it is more deeply spiritual and mystical than in the other. A little more sympathy between Christians in this difference of outlook would go very far towards that more catholic recognition of our Lord's presence with us in the Blessed Sacrament which all who have experience of it must desire for very love of Him.

## II

What we may both feel and understand in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament should be noted because of the assurance it gives. It is true we are to be on our guard and attribute little to mere feeling; but there is here something deeper than feeling: there is that which to the mystic sense is intensely real, a spiritual fact which is clearly apprehended.

1. There is a subdual of the self in us by a Power which we feel cannot be ignored. We are conscious of a Personality before which we are nothing. It is a living, silent force. The very stillness of that

Presence seems to break down our reserves of self-love; we can hide nothing, we are in the presence of a living truth. All our littleness, our weakness, our selfishness, our pride, our secret hidden consciousness, are exposed and open to that living, searching love. We could not, if we would, conceal anything. If we try to hide anything we succeed only in shutting out the graciousness of that Presence. We must humble ourselves in the simplicity of truth before Him Whom we know is before us. But He is all gentleness. His love is unmistakable; and it is penetrating. In His love He shows us what we are, and what we should forsake, and what we should aspire to for His sake. He has wonders of love to reveal to the soul that responds to His leading. And one of the chiefest will be found in the soul's own awakened love as it contemplates the Presence of Jesus. The more profound the contemplation the more the soul perceives an obscure presence, something more wonderful and Divine than was apprehended at the beginning of its prayer. In its degree it appears to be of the nature of that which Saints have known. It is something "present and yet hidden; for though it be hidden, the soul is most profoundly conscious of the good and delight which are there."<sup>1</sup> The soul desires to penetrate the secret, and to test the glory which is hidden. Yet the soul cannot do this for all its love and longing, but is thereby being prepared for it. We must give out in most pure love to our Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *S. John of the Cross*, Sptl. Cant. xi. 5.

In due time He will grant the vision which now we could not bear.

2. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament we are aware of One Who must be worshipped. The self must bow down, and if there are any idols in our hearts,<sup>1</sup> they must be removed, they may even fall and crumble at His look. · Love is the secret of worship; and we know we cannot worship Him if we make no effort to offer our love in simplicity. If during Mass we are led to worship, we can, in the silence, when we visit the Blessed Sacrament, make an even more profound act, because we have then no liturgical movement to follow. We may adore. We have made indeed our acts of adoration during Mass; we followed adoringly from Consecration to Communion; and we return to the Tabernacle to resume and deepen those acts. Thus we may attain to such habitual consciousness of all that is given in the Blessed Sacrament that in the Mass itself we may join with yet holier worship. Reality of worship is not everywhere a marked feature in our churches during Mass; but it would become more evident if all would seek to pay the homage to love to their Lord Whose presence they acknowledge. Might we not in that way attain to a more joyous recognition of our Lord? And would not He manifest His joy in our hearts?

3. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament there is a realization of love, our Lord's love and our own.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ezek. xiv. 1-5.

His love is shown in great tenderness. It is intensely personal. He shows His love in fullest consideration of our needs, our failings, as well as of our desires and aspirations. He desires to strengthen where He loves. Therefore His personal care and regard are always shown. At times He may reveal this love through mystic graces, though these are not to be sought. He makes choice of His Own means for the clear showing of His love. He will lead us as He sees best. Having so found and so experienced His love, we shall seek Him again and again. If we ask concerning the nature of that experience of His love in Communion, we must do so with care, not assuming that we have more than begun to know it. There is a certain high experience known to the Saints which may not be altogether beyond the scope of this meditation. It suggests an ideal of Communion to be approached continually as the soul in simple love receives *His love* in Communion, and uniting her own with His makes return of love. This should become in ever-increasing depth a spiritual act. The soul in its own substance will receive of His love, the effect being the transformation of the soul in love. This is sufficient to show how advanced is the whole conception. The full experience belongs to the highest state of union, to which we have not yet attained. It may be questioned how far we are right in claiming it in any degree short of that state. But I venture to claim that every gift and touch of the Divine love is received within the substance of the

soul, but that the full consciousness of that gift is reserved for the highest degree of union. We thus contemplate a diffusion of His love throughout our whole being; and devout communicants are not wholly strangers to a marvellous increase of love which is simply life to them.<sup>1</sup>

This is not effected where there is not the seeking of love, because the nature of the love between the soul and the Beloved is that of mutual giving, the end of which is perfect union. If we remark that few attain to the perfection of this in Communion, it is surely but a confession of defectiveness of love on the part of many. It is an acknowledgment of all that we feel within ourselves of the causes which underlie our own imperfections. The call to more generous love is to us who do not know ourselves in this respect. It is the call of the love of Jesus.

### III

All that we have considered is in effect the manifestation of the glory of the love of Jesus. Can we in any way account for it? The answer lies within the truth concerning the Blessed Sacrament itself.

1. Regarding the Sacrifice. It is the Memorial of our Lord's Sacrifice on Calvary. Therein is mystically renewed to us all that, as we have seen, resulted in the glory of the love of Jesus. In the Sacrifice of the Mass that glory is revealed even more

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *S. John of the Cross*, Sptl. Cant. xxvi. 5.



evidently to us than to those who watched on Calvary. The glory of love manifested at the Altars of the Church is rather that of the Great High Priest in Heaven. Into His glory there is taken all that was manifested in His Death and Resurrection and Ascension. It is Jesus glorified Who comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament, showing forth His love to us. It will cease to be so manifested on earth only when He comes again, and the temporal existence of the Church passes into the eternal. We do not realize as we might our high privilege in all that concerns our guardianship of the Blessed Sacrament. We should make more of this in our loyalty to catholic practice. The glory should be understood and recognized and celebrated by reverent care in the ritual. This is not the care of priests alone, but of the faithful generally. If we make it the outward and visible tribute of love to His glory of love, we shall do well; for we shall be training for the vision.

2. Our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament is a living presence. It might seem unnecessary to restate a truth so obvious; but we know that very many have never given it due thought. It would even be denied by some who regard the Blessed Sacrament as only a reminder to us of our Lord's Death. They consider our language extravagant. But what we assert is not a theological fiction, but simple fact, *the fact which accounts for all the deep experiences of love which we associate with devotion*

to the Blessed Sacrament. Everything we say and do is in recognition of our Lord Beloved. There will be occasions of dull devotion when our prayer is difficult, and spiritual realities unimpressive. And at such times our Communions will be as dull as our prayers. We may be inclined, as many before us, to refrain from Communion until, as we think, we have recovered our fervour. That is always the mistaken action, except when impenitence is the cause. We should persevere in Communion, and show our real faith in His living presence. He comes to us in the fulness of life and love, and whether we feel it or not we are in His presence. We should offer our best, our intention, our desire, our faith. The trial is only permitted that we may through discipline gain clearness of vision. The glory of His love will reward us if we are true.

8. "*Ye do show the Lord's Death till He come.*"<sup>1</sup> There is a showing forth, therefore, of the glory of His love to the world. In this witness to His love every communicant, every devout worshipper, has part. A Christian becomes through Communion a medium for the glory of His love. Communicants have this high prerogative: they are indeed "*the light of the world.*"<sup>2</sup> We cannot apply our Lord's words to any who are not living the supernatural life revealed in His teaching of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a great reason for, and justification of, frequent Communion. We should do more than frequent the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. v. 14.

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Sacraments for our private spiritual advantage. We have duties to the whole Church. As members we contribute to the good of the whole body. The practice of infrequent Communion does not ensure this; it does not declare the love of our Lord. If we feel the love, how can we bear to be deprived of Communion? How can we fail to consider the loss to others when we are not giving our testimony to His love?

Through countless souls we have experience of the love of our Lord; and each should contribute to others the fruit of that experience. And also we should welcome the knowledge of that love in others because thereby they may learn more of His unnumbered graces. From the Holy Angels we may learn much, seeing how they receive His love, and communicate it through all their orders and ranks. In like manner as souls become more perfect in love, and know God better, they communicate that love. As therefore in the Mass we "*show the Lord's Death till He come,*" we show forth the glory of His love both by the sacrificial act itself, and also by the love which increases within the soul, purifying it and making it glow with the light of that glory.

## IV

Here then as communicants we find encouragement; we find love. And what is so encouraging as love? In the Blessed Sacrament are concentrated

the rays of that glory of the love of Jesus which we have marked in the stages of His Incarnate life, and now acknowledge as the glory within which He is ever aspiring and interceding for us. But we must keep this love fresh and vigorous :

1. By contemplating it in its perfection, approaching it again and again as circumstances and the seasons of the Church's year may lead us; or as through association of love with Him in His Life for us, His Passion, His Resurrection and His Glory, we are renewed in love, our hearts responding to His Sacred Heart. If after each experience, and after each prayer wherein some intuition of His love has been granted, we sought Him in the Blessed Sacrament, and, finding in His Life-giving presence the deep reality of being, we *adored Him*, how much clearer would be our preceptions of the glory of His love. How much more our lives would reveal the truth that we have been with Him. There is a mystic glory which surrounds the soul that is held within the light of His love. We ourselves perceive it in others. It is not necessary that we perceive it in ourselves. "*Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him.*"<sup>1</sup> In a sense this is true of all who have familiar intercourse with God. "They have," as a Saint has expressed it, "a certain air of grandeur and dignity which inspires the beholders with awe and reverence, because of the supernatural effects of their close and familiar con-

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 29.

verse with God.”<sup>1</sup> We need not refuse to contemplate such grace as an effect of devout Communion. We shall not perceive the true glory of the love of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament if we lower our conception of what is possible to a loving soul. A low standard will never inspire to holiness.

2. By making Communion a more perfect act of love. If we expect the fruit of Communion, expansion of spiritual life, elevation of spirit, strength and vigour in all the powers of the soul, and growing union with our Lord, it must be sought with loving purpose. We should make our Communions acts and occasions of love. We should approach them as knowing the Heart of the Beloved in the simplicity of reciprocated love. To Him the Communion of a faithful soul is the moment desired by Him in His love. The leading by Him of the soul in prayer and Communion is towards that perfect degree wherein all our old ways of self-interested prayer are lost in that of simple love expressed between Himself and the soul. We may be far off from that ideal prayer although aspiring towards it. That He cannot suffuse our whole being with its glory is evidence to us of our own imperfection. If we would more truly prepare in love for our Communion we should more certainly perceive the glory. Our daily preparation is concerned with our faults and consequent acts of contrition. This is good. But might we not do more? Might we not also prepare ourselves to make as

<sup>1</sup> *S. John of the Cross, Sptl. Cant. xvii. 7.*

perfect an act of love as possible? How He would encourage us against our faultiness! We should be strong in the very gladness of our hearts for all the love we have experienced.

And let us not make aimless Communions. A right and clear intention is of great assistance to a good Communion. Within the love wherein we meet our Lord in mutual recognition there may be an offering of that which we call intention. That may be varied as our needs or the wants of others are considered. Love conveys them to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and they find a place in His Intercession. It will become easier to do this as we realize more of the glory of His love.

3. By the deep reverence and *awe* with which we approach the Blessed Sacrament. This is consistent with the most perfect love, and even familiarity. Those Saints who are most remarkable for their great love and familiar converse with God have ever been the humblest and most reverent. They were awed in His presence. We may say of their converse with God, not that they presumed in familiarity with Him, but that He in unspeakable love made Himself familiar to them. They responded in the only way He permitted them, love answered to love in simplicity. It was, in other words, love only. God Himself regards most graciously the lowly awe-inspired soul, and because He sees in that one a simple humility, He raises it to a joyous and holy freedom. But the soul's part is to approach with

awe, remembering the majesty of the Beloved. The Church is then the Court of Heaven. The Altar is the Throne of the King. Then within this Court to receive Him to a heart prepared in love is to make that heart His Throne. That is the resting-place He desires. From the heart He has made His Throne He wills to reign over the entire kingdom of the soul. He wills to establish that kingdom under His Own sovereignty in the perfect accord of love. He will make it glorious. This is to grow in love and in the understanding of His glory through the frequent, or even daily, renewals of love in Communion.

We may here notice the practice which finds favour with some of substituting High Mass, Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, and Benediction for Communion. These should not be disregarded, indeed they will be found of greatest value in a devout life, and should be encouraged; but without frequent Communion they cannot be sufficient. We need the sanctifying grace of the Sacraments, to be sacramentally united to our Lord, if we would adore Him in His sacramental presence. Without Communion we lack the interior fitness, the refinement of love which makes adoration real. We must not forget the inward and personal necessity for Communion in our love for the outward expressions of faith in our Lord's presence. If our worship be truly interior by reason of the love which possesses us, we may be sure the outward expression of it will be rendered more effectual. We want, not a hollow worship, not

a service from which we take away the soul and inspiration; we want that within the soul which faithful and good Communions will ensure; then worship will be grand, and convincing. It will be a consummation of joy in the glory of the love of Jesus.

If all this is followed by more real separation from the world, we need not be surprised; nor should we resist the attraction of Divine love which involves us in detachment. The world is very strong, and its allurements very subtle, and we are in constant danger of losing Divine impressions. The glory of the love of Jesus is often manifested in ways so delicate that we shall need to guard our souls with most careful recollection. But the world has nothing to compare with it. The world presents exterior attractions; this is an interior possession. And the glory manifested within the soul is a source of inspiration, and encouragement under trials and necessities. It is the glory of the love of Jesus within the soul which, if we preserve it, will promote our sanctification. Trials and afflictions do not of themselves spoil the interior effects of His love; rather His love increases unto that which S. Paul could anticipate with joy : “*I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*”<sup>1</sup> We wait for that, and many a soul longs for it only the more because of all that is experienced through the Blessed

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 18.

Sacrament. So a Saint cried in his longing for the Vision of God :

“ When I see Thee in the Sacrament  
 And begin to be relieved,  
 The absence of fruition  
 Creates a deeper pang ;  
 All brings greater pain,  
 And the pain is so bitter  
 That I am dying because I am not dead.” <sup>1</sup>

This is no morbid devotion, but the natural outpouring of a heart touched and filled with the love of Christ. How can we *not desire that day and fruition*, who have this present happiness in the Blessed Sacrament so wondrously given—this which for all its wonder is *only to be until He come!* But that which His coming will end is the preparation for that participation in Him when His Saints will give continual praise as they rejoice in the glory of His love.

. . . . .

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who in the Blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood dost wondrously show forth the glory of Thy love through Thy Divine humility ; Grant us so to increase in love that we may both honour Thee with pure devotion and also be made partakers of Thy glory : Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> *S. John of the Cross. A Soul longing for the Vision of God.*

## VII

### The Glory of the Love of Jesus in His Saints

#### I

THE Saints of God ! How much we owe to them ! What they were and what they are is convincing testimony to the power and the glory of the love of Jesus. Every one of them is a monument of grace, an unimpeachable witness to the verities of the Faith, and the efficacy of the Sacraments. Taken together they offer to the world that very proof of Divine love which they are ever ready to demand who are weak in faith. They exhibit the proof in their own victory through love. Divine love enables a soul to triumph through the cross; it does not relieve it of the cross. And why ? Because a Saint is a conqueror through love.<sup>1</sup> There is no victory where there has been no conflict. The Saint is made perfect after the example of the Beloved Himself.<sup>2</sup> And we miss the essentials of Sainthood when we seek them in any other way. Jesus will be glorified in His Saints,<sup>3</sup> because they have in all things overcome by His love.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rom. viii. 37.   <sup>2</sup> Cf. Heb. ii. 10.   <sup>3</sup> 2 Thess. i. 10.

We must know the Saints if we would understand their lives. We do not know them because we have read about them, but because we try to recognize their personality as actors in the Divine drama of catholic life.

Contemplation of the Saints reveals first of all their individuality. No two souls are exactly alike either in their powers and capacities, or in that which they are designed to contribute to the perfection of the Church. This is most evident in our common life. Grace does not change those essential differences, to make all souls alike; but it does so penetrate the soul in its essence as to make all its powers vigorous and forceful. In other words, where this Divine grace is in the soul, there we may look for supernatural virtues, the only virtues which contribute to holiness. The soul, then, assisted by grace develops through all its powers in a supernatural way, and with marked individuality. S. Paul regarding the souls of the redeemed speaks of them as differing from one another as "*one star differeth from another star in glory.*"<sup>1</sup> The attainment of the Saints constitutes a certain element of glory. We know it as the glory of the love of Jesus manifested in them. And their great charity is in another place spoken of as issuing in an eternal glory and brightness : "*They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*"<sup>2</sup> But their

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Dan. xii. 3.

individuality is never obscured. We may even suppose that in glory the Saints will themselves rejoice in their distinctions, because each will thereby render distinctive praise to God Whose eternal thought has found expression through them. The glory of the Saints is that of the Divine love in them; and within the glory, glowing with distinctive brightness, there is a history, the life record, the soul-history, of each Saint. If through the mercy of God we ever find ourselves among them, that will be one of the most arresting of all the elements of saintly beauty. We shall see how grace and love have triumphed over natural weakness; how through discipline the soul has become strong; how the very temptations of life have but made the virtues more manifest; how even our life's mistakes and failures, after repentance, have been worked into that marvellous texture which we call character; and all have been harmonized into a beauty of glory worthy of the love of God. And most wonderful of all, and that which will make their likeness to their Lord most evident, there will be the history of their suffering, of their conformity to the Cross, of their faithfulness, their heroism, their martyrdom, their death. For a moment, in the fulness of recognition, we may perceive all this as a dark background from whence has emerged the glory which distinguishes them. And we shall rejoice with them and glorify our Lord in them.

Each Saint presents the truth we have noticed :

H

viz. that the essential feature of perfected holiness is identification with our Lord in His Passion, His Death and Resurrection. The glory of the individual Saint appears to be in proportion to that identification. Those Saints whom the Church honours with particular reverence are they who in their lives on earth were most evidently conformed to His likeness through suffering. By this sure instinct the Church bears witness to her Divine character; for she exalts those who through their love have penetrated the secrets of the Lord's Passion, and must therefore be nearest to His Heart.

The principle of all we may perceive in the Saints is love. The soul and the Beloved made *one* in love, in love's purpose, and in love's achievement, begun in intention and perfected in the union of love. "*I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"<sup>1</sup> This which is the soul's most clear perception of the fact within its own life explains how Jesus is and will be glorified in His Saints, His life, His love, *in them*. They in Him and He in them. In that union the soul is rendered beautiful; and yet more marvellously beauteous because of the Beatific Vision to which it is admitted; because "in the instant of that vision it will itself be absorbed and transformed into that beauty, and be made beautiful like it, enriched, and abounding in beauty as that beauty itself." This beauty is very precious in the eyes of God, not only because of the evidence it affords of

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

the soul's love, but also because it is His Own beauty which clothes the soul, for there is nothing so precious in His Eyes as His Own perfections. The more we contemplate the beauty of the Saints through union with God in love, the more do we perceive how He is glorified in them. This is more than being glorified by them. The one may be by an act of devotion, the other is through participation in the Divine Nature through love. It is most certain that only through love can we attain to that glory. And therefore the sole intention of life should be love.

## II

The roll of the Saints is being made up. Our place is with them in the mind of God. Shall we forfeit it? Shall we through spiritual failure lose it? We have noticed the steps by which souls advance to this state of glory, that is, to the glory of the love of Jesus in them. But there is need that we insist upon these again and again. It is so easy to admire the way set before us, it is *not so easy to follow*. There is the Cross—that Cross which to some is but another term for their *life*, for all their life is as the Cross to them. But whether it be so to ourselves or not, the fact of the Cross is ever present and we are not always valiant, not always strong. Weak nature falters, and fails. The soul grows so utterly weary

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that it yields not as it fears to the enemy, but to its own self-realized weakness. But also there are occasions of direct faultiness. The enemy takes mean advantage of our weakness, and multiplies the dangers which may induce a fall. Such seasons of trial, however painful, are yet important to the wonderful work of Saint-making. They are times which call for the revival of our highest thoughts of all that the Cross of Jesus stands for.

To Him, and to us as we advance in the way of union with Him, the Cross stands for the highest possible expression of love, whether human or Divine. It becomes, therefore, the standard of perfection for every true follower of Jesus. To aspire to perfect love through conformity to Him through suffering is to challenge the very prowess of the Saints. But perfect love will dare even this. We should die to that *self* which is so subtle in its insistence. We have not understood the Cross if we have not perceived that it cannot conduce to holiness if we are not interiorly mortified. The self is so secretly entrenched that only by continuous acts of mortification can it be weakened, and finally surrendered. Only resolute souls know the strength of spiritual self-love, and how the self within can resist the motions of Divine love. But we can die to self as we live the life of love rising to its own Divine purity; and from that death there issues life. We should rise to newness in purpose and aspiration, for if we have died to self through the exercise of

love there is opened to us a vision of life growing in power through correspondence with Jesus in His Risen and Glorified life: a vision which the soul understands as more and more the effects of love are perceived and felt within it; that is, as in the substance of the soul itself the Divine love, giving life and energy, moves it through all its powers in a more Divine manner than before was possible. We shall with holier purpose of love aspire to that spiritual glory which is set before us. We should employ all our spiritual powers as they are reinforced by the Holy Spirit, using His gifts with understanding love. Because they enrich the soul in its very substance, or essence, they make it marvellously capable of loving. Oh, when we feel the poorness of our love, when we feel the stirring within ourselves of holy desire to love worthily, when the claims of the Beloved are set before us as powerful attractions to love, let us recognize the presence and working of the Holy Spirit, Who is ever seeking our perfection, and ever setting before us the things of Christ. Thus shall we be preparing in love for the fruition of this glory which is the portion of the Saints. We cannot too earnestly seek the increase of this interior love through co-operation with the Holy Spirit. Here we do not perceive as we should how necessary it is to our eternal happiness, nor do we apprehend the truth that the glory of the love of Jesus is to be manifested in *us*; and that we are to prepare for it. Those glorious gifts of the Holy Ghost are Divine, and the

soul enriched by them in their perfection will be resplendent in the glory of Jesus.

We should make our Communions with greater devotion, with clearer intention, and thereafter realize our Lord indwelling as King upon His Throne. There He should reign. His Kingdom is within us.<sup>1</sup> His rule is that of love. Our allegiance is that of love. This may become a most wonderful reality, an absorbing fact. But we should at the same time preserve it with due regard to all external duties. We need not fear to lose His presence, and the pure joy of His rule, while we are only concerned to express His love under all conditions. The soul may be inwardly attentive to Him while outwardly we are discharging some ordinary duty. The secret of love is to be held with great simplicity. If we are generously seeking His honour in our life, He will Himself preserve our joy. He will find us, according to our opportunity, already showing forth the glory of His love. He will find in us that ready mind in His service which is a note of true sanctity. We should above all be strong in *love*, looking on to all that *love* can do; and most of all in interior ways. If we are strong in love to rise above all self-love, in the hidden and secret experiences of our souls, we shall not fail in response to other claims. At the last, we may be sure, the greatness of the soul will be seen in the effects of its hidden victories over all that was merely of the self. Heroic virtues are the results

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xvii. 21.

of interior victories, the fruits of love produced suddenly, and to that end we should exert ourselves continually in the strength of love. To live should be the same thing as to love. We live and we love by the power of God.

The glory of Jesus will irradiate the life even *here*. Very much will be hidden from the world, and from the observation even of those close about us; but we would not have it otherwise. We would not have the soul's secret conflict open to the gaze of others. They will be quick to discern the source of any brightness they may discover in us; they will know it is the love of Christ in us; but they will not know how that glow of love is maintained through mortification and discipline. The love which the soul cannot hide may be the very light of the Risen Life to which it has attained; for, as we have seen, the soul leaves the shadows of Gethsemane and Calvary, and ascends through love to the mystic glory of the Beloved as He raises and fills her.

Very beautiful is this mystic glory of the love of Jesus as it illuminates the faithful soul. Within it the whole life is gradually transformed. It would be a mistake to regard such a soul as already sufficiently sanctified for the Beatific Vision. None know better than the Saints how fallacious is such a conception. The way of illumination is also one which involves us in many secret pains of purgation. The love which already burns within has not yet wholly consumed all that is contrary to itself. There

must be a period of close correspondence to all the revelations of love, and they are marvellous in their extent and beauty. We have so to respond to all that is revealed as to become one with it. Its beauty must pass into the soul's life through its active response, its aspiration, and its realization. That which is revealed assures us, even as we become identified with it, of infinite distances beyond, of love that glows more gloriously as it exalts to the very glory of God. And we are humbled—mercifully humbled—before the vision. Even that which attracts and fills us now is more than we can bear, our earthliness appears to us incompatible with that sublime outspreading of glory. And it is just that remaining taint and evidence within us of our old nature which has to be secretly purged away in the fire of Divine love. We are purified by it as we follow its movements in response to the leading of the Holy Ghost. It is not now, as once, principally through penance that we are purged, but through the action of the will made one with Divine transforming love. So is the Bride-soul prepared for the highest mystical union. As love is the power by which we live, we are sure the day will come when we may contemplate the vision without weakness. And that will be likewise the day of consummated love, the day of that union desired both by the soul and its Beloved.

What this life of developing love has been to the Saints their writings show. But what was possible

in this life when they were not wholly free from hindrances, is far less than the experience which is theirs *now*, as the bud is less than the open flower; but their earlier experience, in a sense, contained the other, which only waited for the time when it would expand to the open glory. Who, regarding a perfect flower, can fully describe its beauty? There is a secret of beauty which is the Creator's Own gift within it, His Own impression upon it. So in a Saint there is a secret of beauty, the Divine love which both impresses and vivifies it. If "*the heavens declare the glory of God*," no less do the Saints declare the glory of His love, the glory which requires for its perfect beauty and expression *a life, a living spirit*. Thus to contemplate again the Saints we see them as living souls whom God has brought within the light and power of His love and made beautiful. And the secret of each Saint's personal beauty, that is, the secret of the glory of the love of Jesus in each one, is that personal fitness or capacity for love which they have freely surrendered to Him. Thus we think of our Lady, of the wonderfully radiant virgin Saints, the great penitent Saints, the Martyrs and Confessors. There is something in each one wherein consists the secret of love between them and God.<sup>1</sup> It is an eternal joy not to themselves alone, but to their Lord with them, for they have attained to a love which is His Own in them. He has taken them to Himself and has so filled them with His

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rev. ii. 17.

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love that they may be said to love Him with His Own love. Thus is the beauty of the Saint a joy to the Sacred Heart. It is worthy of that Heart because it is the effect of His Own love in them.

### III

Thus is the glory of the love of Jesus in His Saints. He has so willed it. Glorious is His Own majesty of love, to be adored by the hosts of Heaven, praised and glorified for ever. But He loves, and wills that His loved ones should share His glory, not by a *mere bestowal of dignity* nor through a mere reflection of His glory, but through a real participation in His Own life, His Own Cross, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. They reach the glory of love by the same steps as He Himself took in His Holy Manhood. What a revelation this will one day be of the glory of the Incarnation, of its boundless effect, and its eternal meaning. We shall know then our true dignity as members of His Body.

As yet we cannot perfectly realize all that we are, nor all that we shall be. “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*”<sup>1</sup> To see Him as He is, is to be made glorious in the vision ; for to behold the Vision is to be transformed and

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John iii. 2.

made able to bear it. How splendid will be the soul that has looked upon God ! Yet for that we were created, for that we were redeemed, and for that we are being sanctified.

At present we view through the conditions of our earthly life the unclouding of the vision of the glory of the love of Jesus as of that which is reserved *for us*. In days of heaviness there is little light, the vision is dim, but the light returns with the brightening of love. Here in this world we know both the heaviness of the night and the joy of the morning. We should pass the dark hours as they who wait for the morning—and it will come. Our Lord Beloved will Himself show us the brightness as He bids us welcome on His Own Day. Yea, more, He will be glorified, let us humbly hope, in us ; He will rejoice in seeing in us His Own glory.

Great will be the joy of His Saints ; but their joy will be not only in the fact of their glory, great as that must be, but in their secret oneness with Jesus through that which is essential to their own personal character—each one made glorious in spite of, yea, because of, all that made life so hard here, and the discipline so sharp. This encourages. No one dare say, “The crown is not for me, this glory is too splendid for me.” No. Are we living souls ? Are we called to catholic life ? Are we living by grace, and aspiring in love ? Then there is set before us that hope of glory. We can make it our own—and yet not *for ourselves*, but for Him Who loves us, for

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Him Whom *we* love, for Him Who is worthy of all glory. We want to be able to make our offering of love then in the spirit, and after the example, of the elders who "*cast their crowns before the Throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power.*"

. . . . .

O Lord our Redeemer, Who art glorified in Thy Saints; Grant us so to follow them in all ways of holy living, that with them we may rejoice for ever in the perfection of Thy glory; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

There is one Life which filleth all in all,  
One Love which worketh to eternal joy;  
God lives and loves for all, and wills to give  
Both life and love, to be Himself revealed  
Within the creature life of man, His child.  
Would'st thou be he in whom thy God shall show  
The raptured, mystic life true-born in thee,  
Aspiring ever while possessing God?  
Renounce thyself and one sweet law obey:  
The law that bids thee love thy God alone,  
Not weakly, but with all the force of life,  
Of nerve and will, and so in knowledge grow,  
Of love by loving as thou lovest more.  
                        God will not leave thee lone  
And cheerless in the desert of thy life,  
Though love must suffer in its eager flight;  
There is no birth without its pain, no gain  
Of joy without its grief; and so the life  
When lived for love alone has often tears.

But tears may be of grace to purge thy sight  
Ere one glad Vision ravish every sense,  
And make thee glad for ever in the joy  
Of the Beloved Who will claim thee then,  
Thine Own, Thy God !

J. B.



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